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THE SCRIPTURE GUIDE TO BAPTISM:

A FAITHFUL CITATION OF ALL THE

PASSAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

WHICH RELATE TO THAT ORDINANCE:

WITH

EXPLANATORY OBSERVATIONS; AND EXTRACTS
FROM EMINENT WRITERS.

BY RICHARD PENGILLY.

REPRINTED FROM THE TWELFTH LONDON EDITION, AND CARE-
FULLY REVISED.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES daily, whether those things were so.”—ACTS xvii. 11.

“Whatever pretends to exceed the direction of the Word may safely be rejected; cannot safely be admitted.”—DR. OWEN.

Philadelphia :

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

118 ARCH STREET.

1857.



PREFATORY NOTE,

BY THE AMERICAN EDITOR.

A FEW words relating to the history and usefulness of this volume cannot be unacceptable to the reader.

In the year 1807, after the completion of his preparatory studies at the Baptist college, Bristol, Mr. Pengilly was ordained, in the bloom of his youth, to the pastorate of the venerable first Baptist church at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and in 1809 published the first edition of this work, under the title of "*The New Testament on its own Ordinance.*" The tract met with much acceptance, and its publication was followed with great success. Constructed on sound Christian principles, and free from the asperity and sarcasm of controversy, it has been carefully read by many thousands, and has led not a few believers in Jesus to follow the example of their Lord in his own ordinance.

At an early period of the existence of the AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, its Board published, in

the form of a tract, a large edition of this work, which has been followed by many subsequent issues to the extent of more than thirty thousand copies. They have also aided in its translation and circulation, in the languages of Germany and France, and rejoice to know that wherever it has been circulated, it has accomplished its high mission.

Encouraged by a special contribution for the purpose, the Board has now issued it in the form of a neat and portable volume. It has been reprinted from the *twelfth* London edition, as revised by its author, with such changes as may make it more acceptable to American readers.

The writer of these lines may, perhaps, be pardoned if he adds, that after a personal friendship with its excellent author for thirty-five years, he feels no small gratification in conducting this useful production of his venerable brother through the American press. Having already passed the age of man, its author will soon enter on his rest and reward, but, to use the language of good Matthew Henry, "as his works follow him in the reward of them, they may stay behind in the benefit of them."

J. B.

Philadelphia, 1856.

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INTRODUCTION.

I CANNOT better introduce the following work to the reader, than by stating the origin of it:—its reference to my own case and circumstances, he will kindly excuse.

From my earliest childhood I was taught to say, according to the catechism of the Church of England, that, in my baptism—"I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." My instructors would readily admit, and in effect taught, the following sentiments, lately given to the world by the Rev. Messrs. Harness and Knight, eminent ministers of the established church:—

One affirms, "With the water of our baptism, the grace of regeneration, the seed of the Holy Ghost, the principle of a higher existence is committed to the soul; it grows with us as an innate impression of our being. . . . As long as the believer trusts to his baptism, as the source of spiritual life, all is well."

The other adds, "On a topic so interesting I might have well enlarged. I might have told you that only by baptism we are admitted into Christ's flock on earth;—by baptism we are adopted into his covenant,

incorporated into his church. . . that in baptism all our sins are pardoned, and the Holy Ghost bestowed." And even Dr. Adam Clarke says, "Baptism brings its privileges along with it—it is a seal of the covenant,—does not lose its end through the indisposition of the receiver."

These sentiments, as far as I received them, were very gratifying. I seemed to have been put, by the kindness of my parents and sponsors, into a situation of unspeakable advantages; and above all, my heaven was secured, and I had nothing to fear in life or death.

Being, however, afterwards brought under a faithful ministry, I observed a most astonishing difference between the statements of the pulpit and the sentiments I had been taught in childhood, as given above. Here I was taught that all mankind were by nature *sinner*s, *depraved* and *guilty*,—that unless they be brought to *repent* of sin, to *believe* in Christ, to *seek* and *find* mercy from God through the Saviour, they must inevitably perish!—As to what was done for me in infancy, I was assured it profited me nothing. My excellent minister would not hesitate to appeal to his congregation, in the inquiries which recently appeared in a public paper:—

"Is not the sponsorial part of the baptismal service a fragment of Popery, without the shadow of a foundation in the Holy Scriptures?"

"Are not thousands of children, who show no signs whatever of spiritual regeneration, taught to repeat a DELIBERATE FALSEHOOD from week to week, when ac-

cording to the instructions of their Catechism, they declare that at baptism they were made 'members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven?'

"Are not multitudes of young people brought to the rite of confirmation, merely that they may renew the solemn farce which was performed by their sponsors at baptism; and that they might take a vow which they never intended to fulfill?"

What these questions implied, and the preceding remarks expressed, appeared to me awfully serious; and the contrariety of sentiment which prevailed, and which the foregoing quotations exhibit, was exceedingly perplexing. My highest and best interest for time and eternity was here involved. On the one hand, I was told that by my baptism "all was well;" and on the other, that the ordinance, as observed upon me, was a "solemn farce!"

What should I do in this case? Why this I resolved I would do; I would take a New Testament, and go through it, and mark down and distinguish in the margin, *all those passages which related to baptism*; and when I had done so, I would read them all over in succession, as one chapter, with care and attention; and as I knew this blessed book was the only original and divine authority on the subject, here, I inferred, I should learn correctly what this ordinance did for children—what was the office of sponsors—and how the ordinance sealed to me the blessing of the covenant.

To my surprise, the New Testament was *entirely silent upon all these points!* I could not find a single

passage relating to the baptism of infants—nor one relating to sponsors—nor one about baptism bringing me into the covenant, or sealing me to its blessings! Every passage I could find, descriptive of the persons baptized, either by John or the disciples of Christ, represented them as persons grown up, instructed, and believing the gospel; nor could I find any passage relative to their bringing their children with them, or at any period, to be baptized. I found, also, that all the commands and instructions given respecting baptism entirely related to its administration to believers, and not one included the duty of parents in securing, by this important ordinance, the spiritual and eternal well-being of their children!

Now, when I considered the unbounded benefits said to be consequent upon children's baptism, and the solemn manner in which I was required to repeat these statements in early life, as if they were the plainest subjects in Scripture, the reader may judge of my surprise in finding them entirely destitute of that sacred authority!

In the end, I was brought to believe that the institution was altered—that it was not *now* observed, where I was early instructed, as originally appointed of Christ. Yet to alter Christ's institutions appeared to me a very presuming act: it was derogatory to the authority of Christ, and a reflection on his wisdom; and as I remembered how God manifested his displeasure against any alteration of what He had appointed under the Old Testament, so I inferred He must be *equally displeased* with any alteration of the

New Testament ordinances. A passage I met with in MATTHEW HENRY'S *Exposition* respecting the conduct and awful fate of Aaron's sons in taking common fire, instead of fire from the altar, to burn incense, I deemed very impressive, and quite appropriate to this subject:—

“Not being holy fire, it is called *strange fire*; and, though not expressly forbidden, it was crime enough that God ‘*commanded it not.*’ For, as Bishop HALL well observes here, ‘It is a dangerous thing, in the service of God, to decline from his own institutions; we have to do with a God who is WISE to *prescribe* his own worship, JUST to *require* what He has prescribed, and POWERFUL to *revenge* what He has not prescribed.’—Now that the laws concerning sacrifices were newly made, lest any should be tempted to think lightly of them, because they descended to many circumstances which seemed very minute, these that were the *first transgressors* were thus punished for a WARNING to others, and to show how jealous God is in the matters of his worship.—Being a holy God and sovereign Lord, He must always be worshiped exactly according to his own appointment; and if any jest with Him, it is at their peril.” On Levit. x. 1–7.

My mind was considerably exercised upon this subject. “Not willingly,” I was constrained to say, “would I jest with Christ's ordinances, or would I support any alteration of his institution. If I knew his will, I would observe and keep it; for the time is coming when I must stand at his bar to give an account of the deeds done in the body; and if I was one

of those who altered his ordinances, or countenanced such a daring presumption, I should have cause to anticipate his divine displeasure." With these impressions I came to the determination, that, at any risk, what the Scriptures taught on baptism I would endeavor to receive and hold, that as CHRIST was to be my only Judge at the last, so He should be my only guide upon this subject. His command to every disciple is "follow me;" and to enable him to do so, He added, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of Me." I did search, and here I saw the path of duty plainly marked out by the footsteps of my Saviour, and instructions of his Word; and his unbounded love and his infinite dignity, rendered obedience to Him unspeakably solemn and delightful.

I resolved also to read whatever authors I could meet with upon this subject, and though I was soon brought to decide and acted upon that decision, guided, I hope, by the Word of God; yet for several years there was not an author that fell in my way, whether treating of the subjects of baptism, or the mode of it, or the spiritual intention of the ordinance, but I felt disposed to examine his arguments. Nothing surprised me more than the strange diversity and opposition of sentiment which I observed between different very eminent writers. What one labored to establish, another as zealously confuted; and I am thoroughly convinced that the only way for an inquiring mind to obtain solid satisfaction upon the subject is to lay aside all preconceived sentiments and prejudices, and to come, with a teachable spirit,

to the fountain-head of information,—to take the New Testament and to go through it, allowing one passage to assist in the understanding of another, and here, on heaven's authority, to form his opinions, and regulate his practice.

But those portions of Scripture which relate to this ordinance are interspersed throughout almost the whole of the New Testament, and for the use of an inquirer upon this subject, a work containing a complete collection of all those passages, appeared to me to be exceedingly desirable. Being called, by the grace of Christ, to the important work of the ministry in the body of Christians, with which, from conscientious principles, I became united, I felt the want of such a work when referring inquirers to the divine and infallible source of information. Not finding such a work in existence, I resolved to prepare one. My first effort was well received; and I afterwards enlarged it by subjoining to each section of Scripture a few explanatory observations, and supported the sense I had given by extracts from the works of eminent Pædobaptist writers.

In the prosecution of my task, I have introduced many extracts from the writings of eminent Pædobaptist authors, who, though they practised differently from what is contended for in these pages; yet, some upon one part of our inquiry, and some upon others, have fully granted and allowed the divine authority of what I have endeavored to point out as having that authority, to the attention of the reader. As, however, I have made my work as *brief* as pos-

sible, these extracts must necessarily be short; but care has been taken to give the *real meaning* of every writer in the passages cited. Their brevity can form no objection; or the same objection might be made against passages cited by the Apostles in the New Testament.

I have also examined, as far as my limits would allow, 1. The arguments generally urged in support of the baptism of infants; 2. What evidence exists of the original mode of baptism; and, 3. What was the spiritual design of the ordinance.



SCRIPTURE GUIDE TO BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

PASSAGES RELATING TO BAPTISM IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

I.—*The Mission, Preaching, and Baptizing of John the Baptist.*

THE first place of Scripture where the ordinance of Baptism is found, is in the account given of the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. The surname of "Baptist" was most probably given him because he was "sent to baptize" by Divine authority, and was the first so authorized and employed. As all the four Evangelists have given some account of John, I shall unite the testimony of the four, and present it to the reader in a continued relation. We have his *Mission*, his *Preaching*, and his *Baptizing* thus recorded:—

JOHN'S MISSION, FROM GOD. Mark i. 1, 2. The beginning of the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before Thee.

John i. 6, 7. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John: the same came to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. Luke iii. 1, 2. Now—the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. Matt. iii. 3. For this is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Luke i. 16, 17. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God: And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

JOHN'S MINISTRY. Matt. iii. 1. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea. Luke iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; Mat. iii. 2. And saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Acts xiii. 24. John preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel; xix. 4; saying unto the people, that they should believe on HIM which should come after him, that is, on CHRIST JESUS.

John i. 19—33. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? He confessed, I am not the CHRIST. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord. And they asked him, Why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ? John answered, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you—who, coming after me, is preferred before me. That HE should be manifest to Israel, therefore

am I come baptizing with water. [For God] sent me to baptize with water.

JOHN'S BAPTIZING. Matt. iii. 5, 6. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark i. 4, 5. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; and there went out unto him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Matt. iii. 7—12. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with the unquenchable fire.

Christian reader, there are THREE INQUIRIES, in relation to the ordinance of Baptism, upon which, I shall imagine, you are desirous of obtaining satisfaction of mind, purely deduced from the Scriptures, namely,—

I. Who are proper *subjects* of Christian Baptism, according to the authority of Christ, and the practice of his Harbinger and Apostles?

II. By what *mode* should the ordinance be administered, according to the same authority and practice?

III. What is the *spiritual design* of Baptism, and in whom is that design realized?

These three inquiries will be kept constantly in view in the following pages. In the foregoing section of Scriptures you have a full account of John the Baptist, with reference to his practice, in which you may notice,—

1. *His Mission was Divine.* He was “sent from God.” He was raised up by the special purpose and power of God, and employed in a work entirely his own—succeeding to no one who had gone before him, and followed by no one in the same office. His instructions for his work he obtained by Divine Revelation, “The word of God came unto John,” and thus his entire work was of God’s immediate appointment.

2. *The great Object of his Ministry was to “prepare the way of the Lord,”* that is, of Christ, who was immediately to follow him, according to the prediction of the prophets, Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1. This great design John was to accomplish, 1. By *proclaiming repentance*—impressing on the minds of his hearers their *guilt* before God; the necessity of being sensible of it, and *confessing* it; and thus, with contrition of heart, to “turn to

the Lord their God.” 2. By *announcing the immediate approach of the long-promised MESSIAH*, assuring the Jews that his “kingdom was at hand;” and 3. By seriously charging and exhorting them to “*Believe on Him* who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” By these labors, attended with the blessing of Heaven, he was “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” And this was happily accomplished, inasmuch as the first disciples of Christ were previously disciples of John. John i. 35—47.

It does not appear, therefore, that the design of John’s mission could be realized, in any but in persons come to the years of understanding; none else could repent of sin; none else could embrace the glad tidings of the coming Saviour, and thereby be “a people prepared” for the service of Christ, who, within one year, was to follow John, and receive the people so prepared.

3. *His ministry was to be followed by the Administration of the ordinance of Baptism.* His commission from heaven included this ordinance. Baptism, as a Divine institution, was unknown in the church of God previous to the mission of John. But he informed his hearers, that the same God who sent him to prepare the way of the Lord, “sent him to baptize with water,” John i. 33; and this, too, was preparatory to the ministry of Christ,

as it was fitted and intended to teach *the guilt of sin*, and the penitent sinner's *purification* in the way which the preaching of Christ should bring more fully to light. Of that blessed work of purification Baptism was an appropriate and impressive EMBLEM. In accordance with these remarks, we have the excellent

MATTHEW HENRY. "Baptism with water made way for the manifestation of Christ, as it supposed our corruption and filthiness, and signified our cleansing by Him, who is the *Fountain opened*." Of John's express commission from heaven for baptizing, Mr. Henry adds, "See what sure grounds John went upon in his ministry and baptism. He did not run without sending; God *sent him to baptize*. He had a warrant from heaven for what he did. . . . God gave him both his mission and his message; both his credentials and instructions." *Expos.* on John i. 6—14 and 29—36.

4. *The persons John baptized had received his ministry, and were professed penitents.* One particular circumstance is expressly asserted by Matthew, and repeated again by Mark, descriptive of the persons whom John baptized, and by the latter it is asserted of "all" of them, namely, that they were baptized, "CONFESSING THEIR SINS." He had preached repentance—exhorted to repentance—and of the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded the "fruits of repentance," while he peremptorily rejected every plea they might urge, particularly that in which they generally gloried,

that they were the children of Abraham; and hence, in accordance with that repentance which John thus preached and demanded, "they were all baptized of him, confessing their sins." Thus, his baptism is expressly called by Mark, i. 4, by Luke, iii. 3, and twice by Paul, Acts xiii. 24, and xix. 4, "the baptism of repentance." This being admitted, it will follow, that the persons—yea, *all* the persons—whom John baptized were THOSE WHO HAD RECEIVED AND BELIEVED HIS MINISTRY; and, as the "fruit" of their conviction, they openly professed repentance toward God, and faith in the approaching Saviour. Thus,

DR. ERSKINE. "John's baptism was termed the baptism of repentance, and baptism to repentance; because he required of ALL, whom he admitted to baptism, a profession of repentance, and exhorted them to such a conduct as would demonstrate their repentance genuine." *Booth's Pædobap. Examined.*

REV. W. BURKITT. "John's baptism was the baptism of repentance, of which infants were incapable." *Expository Notes on Matt. xix. 13—15.*

REV. T. SCOTT. "It does not appear that any but adults were baptized by John.—Adult Jews, professing repentance and a disposition to become the Messiah's subjects, were the ONLY PERSONS whom John admitted to baptism." *Commentary on Matt. iii. 5. 6.*

OF THE MODE OF JOHN'S BAPTISM.

My reader, no doubt, will be aware that the ordinance of Baptism is administered in *three* different ways, in different countries, and by different bodies of Christians, namely, by DIPPING, POURING, and SPRINKLING. He will also be aware, that in whatever way the water be employed, it cannot take away sin. No spiritual benefit can be conveyed by any one mode more than by another; but, notwithstanding this, it is a serious and important question *which* of these has *Divine Authority*? How did the Harbinger of Christ, having God's command upon the subject, administer the ordinance? By which of these modes was Jesus baptized? and his disciples by his sanction? There can be but one mode that has this Divine Authority; a deviation from this is a deviation from the revealed will of God, and can be nothing better than a mere human invention. What is that one authorized mode? Will the Scriptures afford an inquiring mind satisfaction on this subject? No doubt; they were intended for that purpose, on this as well as on every other subject in which our obedience to God is required.

Turn, then, your eye, reader, from the diversified opinions and practices of men to that unerring

and unchangeable source of information which, in these pages, we propose to examine. Two inquiries here suggest themselves :—

I. What does the *word* in the original language, employed by the Spirit of God to express this ordinance, signify? The verb *baptize* expresses an *action*: does it express the action of *dipping*, *pouring*, or *sprinkling*?

II. What mode do the *circumstances* attending the ordinance most evidently imply or favor?

I. To express *the action* by which this ordinance is to be administered, the word so chosen is βαπτίζω, which our translators have not rendered into English by a verb of our own language expressive of the *same action*, but adopted the original Greek word, which, with us, is *to baptize*. To obtain, therefore, *the sense* of this word, we will turn to a Lexicon, where the word in question is explained. We might here call to our assistance lexicographers and other learned writers out of number; but I may with confidence affirm that, in citing one, we cite every competent authority on the subject; for, in the proper and primary sense of the word baptize, learned men of all classes and countries are agreed, as I shall show in a future chapter. The following is from the excellent Greek and English Lexicon of Dr. John Jones, which gives the

plain sense of words without refining or accommodating:—

“Βαπτω, *I dip ; I dye, stain.*

Βαπτίζω, *I plunge ; I plunge in water, dip, baptize ; bury, overwhelm.*

Βαπτίζομαι, *I am plunged ; plunge myself in sorrow ; submit to, suffer.*

Βαπτισμα, *immersion, baptism ; plunging in affliction.”*

“We wonder,” say the Edinburgh Presbyterian Reviewers: “if ever there was a person so ignorant as to deny that *bapto* meant *to dip*.—We suppose it never was denied by any one that *baptizo*, as well as *bapto*, signifies *to dip* or *immerse*.” *Presb. Review*, vol. i., 1832.

To the unlearned reader it may be proper to observe, that the first of these words is the theme or root of the three following, and gives the primary idea of all ; the first sense of which is to dip. The second is the word chosen by Inspiration to express the action by which the ordinance is administered, to baptize, that is, to plunge. The third is the same, in the passive form, used by our Lord respecting his sufferings, in Matt. xx. 22, 23, and Luke xii. 50. The last is the Scripture name of the ordinance, Baptism ; the first sense of which is immersion.

According to this authority, to baptize is to plunge, to plunge in water, to dip; and then, figuratively, to plunge or overwhelm, as in sorrow, suffering, or affliction; and also, that Baptism is immersion. I refer my reader to a subsequent chapter of this volume, for a confirmation of the sense here given; and, requesting him to associate this sense with the words baptize and baptism, when they occur in future sections of Scripture, in order to observe whether that sense harmonizes with other statements connected with the ordinance, we pass on to notice,

II. What mode do the *circumstances* attending the ordinance, as now administered by John, most evidently favor?

1. We should notice the *place* where John administered this ordinance. It was "the river Jordan." If, in reference to the people of Jerusalem, a situation where water might be easily obtained for sprinkling or pouring was what John required, we read of our Lord, at this place, directing the man that was born blind to go and "wash in the pool of Siloam;" so we read of the "Pool called Bethesda," and "the Brook Cedron," all in or near Jerusalem, and we read of others in the Old Testament; and, without doubt, at some of them the penitent Jews of that city and neighborhood might have received the ordinance if

such were the mode by which John administered it; and it cannot reasonably be imagined he would have required those persons to go the distance of several miles for the convenience of the River Jordan: it is more reasonable to suppose he would have baptized in every town and village where his ministry had its intended effect, and especially at or near the metropolis. This strongly favors the opinion, that IMMERSION was his mode. Thus,

DR. TOWERSON. "For what need would there have been of the Baptist's resorting to great confluxes of water,—were it not that the baptism—was to be performed by an immersion? A very little water, as we know it doth with us, sufficing for an effusion or sprinkling." *Booth's Pædobap. Exam.*

2. We should remark next, that not only was *the River Jordan* chosen by John for his baptism, but Matthew states, the people "were baptized of him IN Jordan;" and Mark adds, "IN the *River of Jordan*." The idea of *going INTO the water of a river* for the purpose of baptizing by sprinkling on the face, or pouring on the head, is too absurd to be entertained.

3. Notice also John's language, addressed to those whom he baptized. "I indeed baptize you" (ἐν ὕδατι) "IN water;" not "*with* water," as it is rendered in the English authorized version. The

passage was translated *in water* in some of the early versions of the New Testament into our language. It is *in water* in the Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; it is so rendered by Montanus, and recently, by that pre-eminent scholar, Dr. Campbell (Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen), whose judicious and, in my opinion, unanswerable Note upon the place I will lay before my reader:—

DR. CAMPBELL. “So inconsistent are the interpreters last mentioned [that is, certain Protestant] that none of them have scrupled to render *ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*, *in Jordan*; though nothing can be plainer than that, if there be any incongruity in the expression *in water*, this, *in Jordan*, must be equally incongruous. But they have seen that the preposition *in* could not be avoided there, without adopting a circumlocution—which would have made this deviation from the text too glaring. The word βαπτίζω, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies *to dip*, *to plunge*, *to immerse*, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, *tingere*; the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. It is always construed suitably to this meaning: thus it is, *ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*,” that is, *in water, in the Jordan*. “But I should not lay much stress on the preposition *ἐν*, which, answering to the Hebrew *beth*, may denote *with*, as well as *in*, did not the whole phraseology, in regard to this ceremony, concur in evincing the same thing. Accordingly, the baptized are said to *arise*, *emerge*, or *ascend*, ver. 16, and Acts viii. 39, *from* or *out of the water*. When, therefore, the Greek word baptizo is adopted, rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved so far as may conduce to suggest its original import.”

Let the Reader seriously consider what follows. "It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. *The true partizan, of whatever denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the Spirit by that of the party.*" *Four Gospels*, Note on Matt. iii. 11.

TERTULLIAN, who lived within a century after the apostle John, mentions expressly the people, quos Joannes in Jordane tinxit, "whom John dipped in Jordan." *In Stennet's Answer to Russen.*

Would it not be absurd to render the passage, "John baptized *with* the Jordan?" and if of necessity it must be "in the Jordan," then it undeniably follows, it must be "in water;" and baptism in water, or in a river, wherever so observed throughout the world, is baptism by immersion. But I hope to satisfy any candid inquirer on this subject in a future chapter.

MR. HERVEY, when contending that *en* signifies *in*, adds, "I can prove it to have been in peaceable possession of this signification for more than *two thousand years.*" "Every one knows," he observes in another place, that *with* "is not the native, obvious, and literal meaning; rather a meaning swayed, influenced, moulded, by the preceding or following word." *Letters to Mr. Wesley*, Let. X. and II.

DR. LIGHTFOOT and DR. ADAM CLARKE, "That the baptism of John was by *plunging* the body, after the same manner as the washing unclean persons—was, seems to appear from those things which are related of him; namely, that he *baptized in Jordan*, that he baptized in Enon, 'because there was

much water there,'” &c. *In Dr. Clarke's Commentary*, at the end of Mark.

INFERENCE.—If, then, I am a sincere inquirer after the will of God, and disposed to gather that will from what God has been pleased to reveal in his Word for that purpose, I am constrained, from the foregoing Scriptures, to draw the following inference, namely, That John baptized none but those who gave him satisfactory evidence of being conscious of their sin and guilt before God, and whom he exhorted to repent and to believe in Jesus; and as to the mode, that he immersed them in water, in the Jordan.

II.—*The Baptism of Jesus Christ, from the four Evangelists.*

Our Lord's Baptism we next find immediately following the foregoing account of John. This place attaches to it infinite interest, by the infinite dignity of the Person baptized.

Matt. iii. 13—15. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him, Mark i. 9. [Thus] Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

Matt. iii. 16. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. Mark i. 10. And, coming up out of the water, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased. And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age. Luke iii. 21—23.

And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world! And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. These things were done in Bethabara, where John was baptizing. John i. 28—36.

What, pious Reader, shall we say of the PERSON baptized in *this* case! What an honor is hereby attached to the ordinance, and consequently to all that duly follow the example of the Redeemer in it!

Let the man who slights and contemns this Sacred institution, calling it “an useless, unmeaning ceremony, incapable of washing away sin, or of effecting any good,” read these verses, and view the immaculate SON OF GOD, who had “no sin” to wash away, proceeding from Galilee down to Jordan “to be baptized.” Let him see the “Wisdom of God” entering the streams, and bowing beneath them,

“The emblem of his future grave!”

This, we should suppose, would induce a different sentiment of the ordinance, and silence every objection to the practice of it. And if a sight of CHRIST in Jordan had not that effect, let him hear and see the approbation of the FATHER and SPIRIT testified on this very occasion, and immediately upon his submission to this sacred rite. Never was an ordinance so honored! Here is a dignity given to it infinitely exceeding any of the rites of the Old Testament. Each *Person* of the sacred *Trinity* is specially presented, and each *Divine Person* gives it the testimony of his approbation! The blessed *Redeemer* submits to be baptized; the *Father*, at the instant of his rising from the water, calls Him *his beloved Son*, in whose conduct He was *well pleased*; and the *Divine Spirit*, at the same instant, descended upon Him in a visible form! Oh, to have witnessed this scene, how overwhelming! Nothing, since the commencement of time, has equaled in sublimity and glory, this wonderful event.

Four things are to be noticed in this place.

1. The *Reason* why Christ would be baptized; upon which, hear the very learned

WIRSIUS. "Our Lord would be baptized, that He might conciliate authority to the baptism of John; that by his own example, He might commend and sanctify our baptism; that men might not be loth to come to the baptism of the Lord,

seeing the Lord was not backward to come to the baptism of a servant; that, by his baptism, He might represent the future condition both of Himself and his followers; first humble, then glorious; now mean and low, then glorious and exalted; *that* represented by *immersion*, *this* by *emersion*—and, finally to declare by his voluntary submission to baptism, that He would not delay the delivering up of Himself to be immersed in the torrents of hell, yet, with a certain faith and hope of emerging.” *Pæd. Exam.*

2. The *Time* chosen for fulfilling the promise of pouring forth the Spirit upon Christ. This is noticed and improved by the pious

DR. DODDRIDGE. “Jesus had no sin to wash away, yet He was baptized; and God owned that ordinance so far as to make it the season of pouring forth the Spirit upon Him. And where can we expect this sacred effusion, but in a conscientious and humble attendance upon Divine appointments?” *Fam. Expos.* on the text.

3. The *Language* of Christ, in answer to John; which is thus explained by an esteemed Commentator:—

THE REV. THOMAS SCOTT. “Thus it becometh us, etc.” “We never find that Jesus spake of Himself in the plural number; and it must therefore be allowed, He meant John also, and ALL the servants of God, in a subordinate sense. It became Christ as our surety and our example, perfectly to fulfil all righteousness; it becomes us to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of God, without exception, and to attend on every Divine institution—as long as it continues in force. Thus far Christ’s example is OBLIGATORY.” *Commentary on Matt.* iii. 13—15.

4. The *Circumstance* immediately following his baptism, namely, his “coming up out of the water,” which evidently implies that He went down into it, as is expressly said of Philip and the Eunuch, Acts viii. 38; a circumstance required in no mode of baptism but immersion, and hence, we infer that Jesus was *buried*, or *immersed* in the water. To this mode of baptism our blessed Saviour plainly alludes when referring to his overwhelming sufferings, in Luke xii. 50, which we shall examine hereafter.

DR. CAMPBELL’S Translation. “Jesus being baptized, no sooner rose out of the water than heaven was opened to Him.” *Four Gospels*, Matt. iii. 16.

DR. DODDRIDGE’S. “And after Jesus was baptized, as soon as He ascended out of the water, behold, the heavens were opened unto Him.” *In Loc.*

DR. MACKNIGHT. Jesus “submitted to be baptized, that is, buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emblem of his future death and resurrection.” *Apostolical Epistles*. Note on Rom. vi. 4.

BISHOP TAYLOR. “The custom of the ancient Churches was not sprinkling, but immersion; in pursuance of the sense of the word in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour.” *Pœd. Exam.*

I never, my reader, can think of the Baptism of this Glorious and Divine Person—the Son of God—the Lord from Heaven—the righteous Judge of the last day—the Author of our Salvation, and the Giver of eternal Life, but with feelings of the

deepest interest. We observe Him here proceeding on his long journey, for Nazareth was three days' journey from Jerusalem, and not less from Bethabara; the object expressly is, "to be baptized." We observe Him admitting of no argument against his submission to that rite; and we ought never to forget how He associated his people, his followers, with Himself, "thus it becometh us!" the servant as well as the *Lord*, the members as well as the *Head*, "to fulfil all" practical "righteousness;" all that God enjoins and requires. How strong is the obligation to realize what the Saviour here intended! Who will not concur in the pious decision of Mr. POLHILL? "the pattern of Christ and the Apostles is more to me than all the human wisdom in the world." Nor can any one deny me the following

INFERENCE.—The Baptism of Jesus, as an Example, is fulfilled in the baptism of a Believer by Immersion, and in no other case.

III.—*Christ Baptizing, by his Disciples.*

THIS is the only mention of our Lord's baptizing, or of the disciples doing so by his authority and direction, during his corporeal presence with them; and, consequently, it claims our very serious attention.

John iii. 22—27. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and baptized. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. He must increase, but I must decrease.

Chap. iv. 1—3. When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus Himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. x. 40—42. And He went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized. And many believed on Him there.

The import of this passage is simply this,—Jesus went into the land of Judea and baptized certain disciples, many hearing of Him, and remembering what John had preached concerning Him, flocked to Him,—and soon it was generally known and said, as the happy fruit of his labors, That Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; upon which the Saviour departed and went into Galilee. He again, however, visited this interesting place, and many more believed on Him there. It is added by the evangelist, that Jesus Himself did not baptize, but his disciples administered the sacred rite in his name, and by his direction and authority; and being thus done, it is the same as if the Saviour had baptized by

his own hands; and it is therefore said, "Jesus baptized."

The chief thing to be noticed here, and it is certainly of importance on our first inquiry, is this, that Christ *made* disciples before He baptized them. He did not begin by baptizing, and afterwards instructing; but He first taught them his Gospel, and they believing and embracing his Word, are thereby "made disciples;" and hence they are said to "come to Him," to conform to his commandments; and then, secondly, He baptized them. As this is *all* the Evangelists have recorded respecting Christ's baptizing, through the whole of his ministry, this is, consequently, *ALL* in which the Practice of Christ is given for the guide of his people. What we are to understand by "disciples," or "making disciples," is thus described by

DR. OWEN. "By the disciples of Christ, I intend them, and them only, who profess faith in his person and doctrine, etc.-- This is the method of the Gospel, that first men, by the preaching of it, be *MADE DISCIPLES*, or be brought unto faith in Christ, and then to be taught to do and observe whatever He commands." *Pæd. Exam.* So MR. BAXTER: "A disciple and a Christian are all one." *Ibid.*

CHRIST, however, may be heard for Himself, as to what is intended by *his disciples*: "Who-soever doth not bear his cross, and come after

Me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 27. Whatever, therefore, may be said in favor of infant baptism, it cannot be said, that either CHRIST'S *Example or Practice* afford it any support; and we shall presently come to his *Command* on the subject. But in passing from noticing the *Practice* of Jesus, let me cite the words of one of the most eminent Pædobaptist Commentators on the Bible, England has ever known:—

THE REV. T. SCOTT. "The baptism of Jesus was, doubtless, of adults alone." *Commentary* on John iii. 22—24.

IV.—*John's Baptism, in Ænon.*

The next passage we find on our subject is contained in a few words. It is, however, of powerful import relative to the *MODE*.

John iii. 23. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized.

Of the *Persons* here alluded to, as baptized by the Harbinger of the Redeemer, nothing is said descriptive of them, except that "they came" to John, as the penitent Jews had before done at Jordan, and, like them, "were baptized;" which implies, that it was their own *voluntary act* thus to seek this holy rite: and if so, they must have been previously *instructed*.

But, in reference to our inquiry on the *Mode* of baptism, this passage is of great weight. We have here the REASON assigned, on account of which John chose the place where we now find him pursuing his divinely-appointed work. He is baptizing in Ænon, “because there was MUCH WATER there.” No candid Christian, I think, can object to the following

INFERENCE.—If John chose a place for the purpose of baptizing, on account of one circumstance necessary for that ordinance, namely, “because there was much water there,” then his Mode of baptism required *much water*: But much water is not necessary for any Mode of baptism but *Immersion*, and hence, without doubt, *that* was his practice. The same inference was drawn, with as little doubt, by the illustrious Pædobaptists following:—

CALVIN. “From these words, John iii. 23, it may be inferred, that baptism was administered, by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water.” *Pæd. Exam.*

DR. WHITBY. “Ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ,—*Because there was much water there*, in which their whole bodies might be dipped: for in this manner *only* was the Jewish baptism performed, by a descent into the water, Acts viii. 38, and in ascent out of it, verse 39, and a burial in it. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Col. ii. 12.” *Annot. on the place.* See Drs. Lightfoot and A. Clarke, already quoted.

My Reader need not be told, that those who

practice sprinkling never go to rivers, or places of much water, to administer the ordinance; and if they should do so, the great quantity of the water could not be assigned as the reason for choosing such places; because in their Mode, a very small quantity only is required. Not much candor is necessary to admit the truth so plainly conveyed as in this passage.

The remark some have made, that the words, "much water," should be "many waters," and refer to *many shallow streams*, is sufficiently answered by a learned Pædobaptist expositor, who thus *renders and explains* the passage:—

DR. DODDRIDGE. "John was also, at that time, baptizing at Ænon,—and he particularly chose that place, because there was a *great quantity* of water there, which made it very convenient for his purpose." "Nothing, surely, can be more evident, than that [polla hudata,] *many waters*, signifies a *large quantity of water*, it being sometimes used for the Euphrates. Jer. li. 13. (*Septuag.*) To which, I suppose, there may be an allusion, Rev. xvii. 1. Compare Ezek. xliii. 2, and Rev. i. 15; xiv. 2; xix. 6; where *the voice of many waters* does plainly signify the roaring of a high sea." *Fam. Expos.* Paraph. and Note on the place.

V.—*References of Jesus Christ to John, his Baptism and Success.*

As the passage, in the preceding section, contains the last record of John's baptizing, it

appears proper to follow it by the reference of Jesus to his Harbinger and his labors, when he was no more.

Mark xi. 29—33. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one question. The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men: all the people will stone us: Luke xx. 6, they feared the people; for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell.

Luke vii. 29, 30. And all the people that heard Him, and the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.—Matt. xi. 11. Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. He was a burning and a shining light. John v. 35.

Here observe 1. The Redeemer, in these and other passages, gives John a high eminence among the servants of God: never had our world witnessed a more illustrious man.

2. From the question which the Redeemer proposed to the Jews, whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men? in order to convict them of their guilt in treating John's labors as they had done, it will evidently follow, that it was "from heaven." Had John's baptism been borrowed from Jewish proselyte baptism, it would have been of men, for that is unknown in

the Word of God, and then the question might have been answered without hesitation, and the design of our Lord, in that case, could not have been realized.

3. The common people, who heard John's ministry, the Saviour adds, justified God, that is, approved of the Divine conduct in John's ministry and baptism; and this they evinced in "being baptized with the baptism of John," while classes of higher religious repute, "the Pharisees and lawyers," in contempt of this messenger of God, and his message too, "*rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of Him.*"—Here our Lord plainly indicates that the ordinance of baptism was a part of "the counsel of God," that is, his mind and will; and, as far as this rite is contemned, so far the counsel of God is "rejected;" and it is, emphatically, "against themselves" if persons thus oppose what God enjoins.

INFERENCE.—If John, who was but a man, is to be so highly regarded, and his baptism received as "the counsel of God;" so that neglect of it thus meets the marked disapprobation of our Redeemer; how much more may the Divine displeasure be expected on them who slight this sacred ordinance in that still more interesting form, in which we shall presently find it,—enjoined

by HIM, whose name is written, "KING of kings, and LORD of lords !" Surely I may add, "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven !" Heb. xii. 25.

VI.—*Christ represents his sufferings under the Figure of "a Baptism."*

Matt. xx. 22, 23. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He said unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Luke xii. 50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !

Our Lord, in these affecting and impressive passages, is referring to the greatness of his approaching sufferings,—and, by a metaphor, he calls them "a Baptism." An interesting question from hence arises, in reference to our second inquiry, Does sprinkling a little water on the face, or being totally immersed and overwhelmed in a large quantity, most appropriately exhibit an image of the severity of the sufferings of Christ?

The following extracts will, I have no doubt, represent my reader's opinion.

DR. DODDRIDGE thus paraphrases the places: "Are you able to drink of the bitter cup of which I am now about to drink so deep, and to be baptized with the baptism, and plunged into that sea of sufferings with which I am shortly to be baptized, and, as it were, overwhelmed for a time?" *Fam. Expos.*, on the place.

DR. CAMPBELL'S Translation: "I have an immersion to undergo; and how am I pained till it be accomplished!" *Four Gospels*, in loc.

WITSIUS. "Immersion into the water, is to be considered by us, as exhibiting that dreadful abyss of Divine Justice, in which Christ, for our sins, was for a time, as it were, absorbed; as in David, his type, he complains, Ps. lxi. 2. *I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*" *Æcon. of the Cov.* L. IV. c. xvi. s. 26.

THE REV. JAMES HERVEY expresses himself, on this subject, with great energy. "He longed, beneficent, blessed BEING! He longed for the fatal hour. He severely rebuked one of his disciples who would have dissuaded Him from going as a volunteer to the cross. He was even *straitened*, under a kind of holy uneasiness, till the dreadful work was accomplished; till He was baptized with the baptism of his sufferings, bathed in blood, and plunged in death!" *Theron and Aspasio*.

"SIR HARRY TRELAWNEY, under whose impressive ministry," says the late amiable Rev. James Dore, of London, "my first religious feelings were invigorated, referring to those words of our Lord, exclaimed to this effect: 'Here, I must acknowledge, our Baptist brethren have the advantage: for our Redeemer's suffering must not be compared to a few drops of water sprinkled on the face, for He was *plunged* into distress, and his soul was environed with sorrows.'" *Sermons on Baptism*.

INFERENCE.—If our Lord intended the ordinance of baptism to exhibit an image of the *overwhelming* sorrows of his soul, in the garden and on the cross, his intention is frustrated by the change of immersion into sprinkling ! And if this be admitted, and it cannot be denied, what devout Christian can think of this change but with deep regret !

VII.—*The Commission which our Lord gave his Apostles about the time of his Ascension into Heaven, containing the formal Institution of Christian Baptism.*

We have already seen that Baptism, as a New Testament ordinance, was instituted of God, and enjoined upon John as the Herald and Precursor of Christ. It is evident, also, that John administered it upon an admitted or professed acknowledgment of faith “in Him *who was to come* after him.” Acts xix. 4. But after our Redeemer had come, and finished his work, an alteration was necessary in this particular circumstance. None on earth, but Jesus, could make that alteration ; and He, as HEAD and LORD of the Church, now does it ; requiring it to be henceforth administered, “in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.” This I con-

sider as a *renewed institution* of the same sacred rite, altered only in its reference to the coming of Christ to set up his kingdom. And, what adds greatly to the solemnity of it in this renewed form, our Lord delayed its institution till his last moments on earth, and then united it with his final parting, and solemn charge, given by Matthew and Mark in the verses following.

Matt. xxviii. 16—20. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark xvi. 15—19. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

How solemn and interesting was this occasion ! The Redeemer had undergone the baptism of his sufferings, last described—He had been bathed in blood in the garden !—He had sunk into death on the cross, under floods of wrath, due to mankind ! But now He is risen triumphant, and is about to ascend to his glory.

He had appointed his disciples to meet Him on a mountain of Galilee, where He was to give them his last most solemn and important charge, contained in the verses above. The interesting hour is come : we may be sure the disciples are eager to catch every word from their ascending Lord, and that He would give them his directions in the plainest language possible.

He begins by encouraging their sorrowful minds by a view of his supreme power in heaven and earth—in *heaven*, to give them the Holy Spirit ; to employ the angels in their behalf ; and, finally, to bestow the kingdom of heaven upon them. So He had all power *in earth*, to gather his church out of all nations ; to subdue or restrain his enemies ; and to reign over and dwell with his people as Lord and King of Zion.

Then the Saviour gives them the ever memorable COMMISSION for preaching and baptizing, which we cannot too attentively consider. If you think there is any obscurity in the one Evangelist, the other will explain him ; and this explanation you will, no doubt, esteem preferable to ten thousand criticisms. By uniting the words of both, they may be thus disposed : “Go ye, therefore, into all the world ; teach all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature ; him that believeth baptize, in the name of the Father, and

of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and he shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Our Great Legislator, who only has the right to enact laws for his church, to whom we must submit, and who will have nothing taken away from, or added to his Word, Rev. xxii. 19, has here described to his apostles *the person* to whom they are to administer this his ordinance, namely, the *believer*—the person who shall cordially believe the gospel which they shall preach. And if we allow Him to have expressed his mind clearly and fully, *He restricts the ordinance to the believer alone*. He has given no direction to admit any other to it; and who will dare to speak where HE is silent? Who shall enlarge or extend the limits which HE has prescribed? or, who will dare to go beyond, or attempt to remove, the boundaries HE has fixed and established? Surely the mind of a true disciple recoils at the thought. Let us now hear the remarks of some eminent Pædobaptist writers on these passages:—

THE REV. ARCHIBALD HALL, a Presbyterian. "How grand and awful is that weighty preface to the institution of Christian baptism! Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Who is that daring, insolent worm, that will presume to dispute the authority, or change the ordinances of HIM who is given to be Head over all things to the Church? The solemnity of this ordinance

is complete ; and all the purposes of its institution are secured by the authority and blessing of Christ. His laws are not subject to any of those imperfection which are attendants of the best contrived system among men, and frequently need explanations, amendments, and corrections. It is most dangerous and presumptuous to add any ceremony, or to join any service, on any pretence, unto Heaven's appointment." *Gospel Worship*, Vol. I.

The late REV. CHARLES SIMEON, of Cambridge, an eminent Episcopalian, has given us a skeleton of a sermon on this Commission of Christ, in which he proposes to consider, "I. The authority He claimed. II. The commission He gave to his apostles. 1. They were *to teach* all nations. 2. They were *to baptize their converts* in the name of the sacred Three." Then, he adds, "But though they first taught adults and then baptized them, THEY REVERSED THIS ORDER with respect to infants."

On reading the last sentence, the inquirer with surprise might ask, *Who* reversed this order? The answer here is, the apostles. Reversed *what* order? The answer is, The order of Jesus Christ; *first*, to teach, and, *second*, to baptize. Awful thought! that mortal worms should presume to alter the institutions of the Lord of glory; yea, to *reverse* the order He ordains!

Here is a candid confession that the order of Jesus Christ is "reversed with respect to infants." A fact, alas! too plain to be denied.

With respect to the apostles, however, the charge is not true. *They* never reversed any order or appointment of Christ. He enjoined

upon them, in his last words, to “teach men to observe whatsoever He had commanded them;” and any *adding* or *taking away*, to say nothing of *reversing*, He solemnly prohibited, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. The order of Christ is reversed, but it was not till the apostles and primitive disciples had long quitted the world.

POOLE’S CONTINUATORS: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.” The Greek is, make disciples of all nations, but that must be first by preaching and instructing them—and Mark expounds it, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature? that is, to every reasonable creature capable of hearing and receiving it. I cannot be of their mind who think that persons may be baptized before they be taught: we want precedents of any such baptisms in Scripture.” *Annot. in loc.*

CALVIN. “Because Christ requires teaching before baptizing, and will have *believers ONLY* admitted to baptism, baptism does not seem to be rightly administered, except faith precede.” *Pæd. Exam.*

SAURIN. “In the primitive Church, instruction preceded baptism; agreeably to the order of Jesus Christ, “*Go, teach all nations, baptizing them,*” etc. *Pæd. Exam.*

THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER has a very forcible passage, on the same place: “Go, disciple me all nations, baptizing them.” As for those who say they are disciples by baptizing, and not before baptizing, they speak not the sense of the text; nor that which is true or rational; else, why should one be baptized more than another?—This is not like some occasional historical mention of baptism; but it is the very commission of Christ to his apostles, for preaching and baptizing; and purposely expresseth their several works in their several places and order. Their *first* task is, by teaching, to make

disciples, which are, by Mark, called believers. The *second* work is, to baptize them, whereto is annexed the promise of their salvation. The *third* work is, to teach them all other things which are afterwards to be learned in the school of Christ. To condemn this order, is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here? I profess, my conscience is fully satisfied from this text, that it is one sort of faith, *even saving*, that **MUST GO BEFORE BAPTISM**; and the profession whereof, the Minister must expect." *Pæd. Exam.*

The last Scripture we cited closes the information which the Four Gospels afford us on the subject of Baptism. Before we pass to the subsequent books, I beg to remind the reader, that we have now had before us the practice of John; and the example, practice, and command of our Lord Jesus Christ. As yet, we have not met with a single passage, or word, which can fairly be interpreted as indicating that any persons should receive this ordinance, or are proper subjects for it, but those who have been first taught the gospel, and who profess to believe it.

But I am most anxious to impress on the attention of an inquirer, the words of Jesus in the Commission which we have just read. Remember, reader, that this Jesus is to be our Judge at the last great and awful day; and that He will not judge us according to the opinions, creeds, or practices of men, but according to his own Word. Upon this command of our Saviour, I would,

therefore, beg briefly to add, and leave to the reader's deliberate meditations:—

1. That we have here *the enactment* of the *Divine Law* in reference to Baptism: and this Law we find delivered in language the most solemn, and in circumstances the most interesting and affecting.

2. That this Law of Jesus is not like human laws, which admit of alterations or amendments. None but Jesus has authority to alter what He appoints; and, coming from the Fountain of heavenly wisdom, who will presume to improve upon His appointment? And,

3. This Law is as delightful to the mind of a Christian, as it is solemn. The words, “baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” imply a public recognition of the glorious change which has taken place in the spiritual circumstances of true converts, in their having passed from the family of sin and Satan, into the family of the TRI-UNE GOD! A change, not of the *ordinance*, but of the power and grace of God, and in the ordinance represented and avowed.

We now pass on to the *Acts of the Apostles*. Here we have an historical relation of the labors of the apostles, for above thirty years after the ascension of Christ; and here we shall find the

baptism of many thousands of persons. If we have misunderstood the will of Christ on this subject, *the apostles surely did not*, and their obedience to his command will correct our error; but if, on the contrary, we have rightly interpreted his will, their obedience will confirm our opinion.

CHAPTER II.

BAPTISM AS TAUGHT IN THE ACTS OF THE
APOSTLES

“THE penman of this Scripture,” the Assembly of Divines in their argument to it, assure us, “was Luke the Evangelist, as appears from the first words of it, for the most part an eye-witness to the things he records, being constantly a fellow-laborer with Paul. His purpose” they add, “in writing this narrative was, as he intimates in his first preface, that the Church might have the certain knowledge of Christ, his gospel, and kingdom; that our faith might not be built on the uncertain reports of pretenders to truth.” Hence, admitting the writer to be a faithful and pious historian, and writing purposely for the direction of the Church of Christ in all following ages; and above all, under the influence of the Spirit of God, we may safely rely, not only on the accuracy of the accounts, but on the fullness and sufficiency of the information to answer the professed purpose.

We have here, on infallible record, NINE IN-

STANCES of the administration of baptism, which we will examine in their order.

I.—*The Baptism at the Feast of Pentecost.*

On this memorable occasion, which was but ten days from the ascension of Christ, when the apostles and disciples were together at Jerusalem, it pleased God to accomplish the promise of sending them the Holy Ghost. By his miraculous power they were enabled to speak in different languages to the multitude then assembled at Jerusalem from different nations; so that every one heard, in his own tongue, the wonderful works of God. Peter delivered to the multitude an impressive discourse, in which he charged the Jews with having crucified the Lord of glory; but added, that God had raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to his right hand, as the only Lord and Christ. Upon this follow the verses relating to the ordinance, and descriptive of the subjects of it.

Acts ii. 37—47. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are

afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers; praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

Here we must observe, how the apostle Peter obeys his Lord's direction in the Commission. He begins by preaching, and said not a word about baptism, till he found some of his hearers evidently answering the character, "he that believeth." Hence, the persons who were baptized are thus described,—1. Their hearts were deeply penetrated by the truths they heard, so that they cried, "What shall we do?" 2. They were exhorted to repent of their sins. 3. They at length "*gladly received the word*," and thereon were baptized, and added to the Church. 4. They afterwards continued steadfast in the doctrine of the gospel, and in the practice of its duties. Not a word of this will apply to infants.

There is, however, one clause in the 39th verse of the above Scriptures, "*The promise is to you, and to your children*," which is commonly urged in favor of infant baptism; as if the apostle alluded to some promise, on the ground of which, infant children were deemed proper subjects of Christian

baptism. To answer which, let the three following things to be considered :—

1. The promise, to which the apostle alludes, has no relation to *infant* children, it being the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, joined with its effects, of which infants are incapable. The reader will observe that the people, on this occasion, were astonished at the effects produced by the gift of the Spirit. The apostle assures them, verses 16—18, that it was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, which prophecy is thus expressed, Joel ii. 28 : “ I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, etc. The apostle having delivered an impressive discourse, observing his hearers deeply affected and amazed at the gifts of the Spirit, in order to turn their amazement into hope and joy, refers them a second time to this promise, and to their own interest in it, in the following words, verses 38, 39, “ Repent, etc., and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ; FOR, by this I assure you of it, the *promise* is to you and to your children.” Now, as the gift of the Spirit, with his miraculous powers, is the object of the promise, and as infant children are incapable of that gift, children in infancy cannot be intended. Thus the following learned Pædobaptists :—

DR. WHITBY. "These words will not prove a right of infants to receive baptism; the promise here being that only of the Holy Ghost, mentioned in verses 16, 17, 18, and so relating only to the times of the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, and to those persons who, by age, were capable of these extraordinary gifts." *Annotations* on the place.

DR. DODDRIDGE. "The promise is to you and to your children. Considering that the gift of the Spirit had been mentioned just before, it seems most natural to interpret this as a reference to that passage, in Joel, which had been so largely recited above, verse 17, etc., where God promises the effusion of the Spirit, on their sons and their daughters." *Fam. Expos.* Note on the place.

2. The word in the original, *τεκνα*, rendered children, signifies posterity; and does not necessarily imply infancy.

DR. HAMMOND. "If any have made use of that very un-concludent argument, [referring to this passage, Acts ii. 39,] I have nothing to say in defence of them.—The word *children* there is really the posterity of the Jews, and not peculiarly their infant children." *Works*, Vol. I.

LIMBORCH, a learned divine of Amsterdam. "By *τεκνα* the apostle understands, not infants, but posterity; in which signification the word occurs in many places of the New Testament; see, among others, John viii. 39. "If ye were Abraham's *children*, ye would do the works of Abraham." Whence it appears, that the argument, which is very commonly taken from this passage for the baptism of infants, is of no force, and good for nothing." *Comment. in loc.*

3. The words of the apostle immediately following, explain his own meaning in the most decisive terms: "The promise is to you, and to your

children, and to all that are afar off, even *to as many as the Lord our God shall call*,”—“to as many of you and your children, and the Gentiles afar off, as God should call by his word and Spirit to this great privilege.”

MATTHEW HENRY. “To this general, the following limitation must refer, *even as many of them*, as many particular persons in each nation, *as the Lord our God shall call* effectually into the fellowship of Jesus Christ.” *Exposition* of the place.

INFERENCE—From the whole, it appears most evident, that none were, in this case, encouraged to hope for Christian baptism, but such as gave evidence of being called effectually by grace; and none were in fact baptized, but such as “gladly received the word.” So far, the word of God is our plain guide.

II.—*Philip Baptizing at Samaria.*

Acts viii. 5—13. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. And there was great joy in the city. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

In this instance, as in the former, the Commission of Christ is strictly obeyed. Philip began his work by preaching Christ to them; and when they had heard the doctrines and saw the miracles, they were filled with joy. Not a word about baptizing till some of the people “believed” the things concerning Jesus Christ; then “they were baptized, both men and women.”

Now, if it were the will of Christ that infants should be baptized, and it were true that the apostles, like Pædobaptist missionaries among the Heathen,* were accustomed to baptize children together with the parents; then, if any of those “men and women” at Samaria had children, which surely is highly probable, Philip must have

* In the accounts we are often receiving from Pædobaptist missionaries among the heathen, our brethren naturally inform us of the children, as well as the adults, they baptize. For example, in the “Missionary Register” for the year 1821, a Report from South Africa, states—“During the year 1819, twenty adults and twenty-one children were baptized.” A missionary in Western Africa, states—“September 3d, Sunday—I preached, and then baptized twenty-three adults and three infants.” Nov. 29th,—“On the first Sunday of this month I baptized thirty-four adults and their children; forty-eight in all.”

Rev. C. Mault writes from *Nagercoil*, East Indies: “Last month I baptized five adults and four children.” Rev. C. Barff writes from *Huahine*, South Sea Islands: “Thirty were added to the Church during our visit, and a number baptized. Among those baptized were sixteen infants.” *Missionary Chronicle*, for November, 1826.

Are not such accounts quite natural where infant baptism prevails? And why is there a perfect silence throughout the history of apostolical labors on this subject? Their practice surely was not the same.

baptized them ; but, had he baptized men, women, and children, is it to be imagined that the inspired historian, writing, as he says, “of *all* that Jesus began to do and to teach,” and “having had perfect understanding of *all things* from the very first ;” — and his avowed design being that his reader “might know the certainty of things ;” is it to be imagined that he would particularize the two, out of the three descriptions of the baptized, and omit the third ? This I conceive impossible ; and therefore draw this—

INFERENCE.—When the evangelist states, “they were baptized, both men and women,” had infants also been baptized, he must have added, to have completed the record of the circumstance, “and children ;” but not making that natural and necessary addition, I infer, that “men and women” *only* were baptized ; that no infants received the ordinance with them ; and therefore, that the practice of infant baptism at that time did not exist.

III.—*The Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch.*

The eunuch described in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, was a person of high authority in the kingdom of Ethiopia, but, it would seem, a proselyte to the Jewish religion. He is

here returning from Jerusalem. Philip is directed to meet him in his way. He found the eunuch reading, as he proceeded in his chariot, the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 7, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," etc. He is desirous that Philip should explain to him, Whether the prophet, in that place, spake of himself or of some other? and he took him up into his chariot for that purpose: upon which the evangelist adds:—

Acts viii. 35—39. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

My reader will not need to be reminded of the Commission of his Redeemer, after perusing these verses. We have here a plain example of the practice of the apostles, before they admitted a person to baptism. Philip might have deemed the eunuch, after having heard the gospel, a proper subject for baptism, by being directed from heaven to teach him,—he might have inferred it also,

from his sincere request of it ; yet he does not, he dares not, baptize him, until he openly profess to “believe with all his heart ;” remembering, no doubt, that Christ had appointed the ordinance for such, and for such only. Nothing can demonstrate more clearly than this that a declaration of faith was indispensably required previous to baptism.

Those who contend, that servants and children were all baptized in those days, with, and on account of, their masters and parents, would find it difficult to support their hypothesis in this case. It is the greatest absurdity to suppose that Philip would admit the eunuch’s servants to baptism, without any profession, or even instruction, when he would object to the pious master, after he requested it, unless he was able to give a frank and open profession of faith in Christ. But he baptized *none* but the eunuch ; and therefore we may safely conclude, the apostles had “no such custom, neither the churches of God.”

We have, in this case, the circumstances attending the administration of baptism more minutely described than in any other instance recorded in the New Testament. The reader is requested to observe the following things :—

1. If *sprinkling* or *pouring* were the mode of baptism ordained by Christ, and practised by the

apostles, we are assured, by the best authority, that travelers through those deserts never omitted to furnish themselves with vessels of water for their journeys; that this provision was absolutely necessary; and, if so, the eunuch had all that was required for the ordinance, without waiting till they came to a place of water. See Dr. Doddridge, as hereafter cited, and Dr. Shaw's Travels, as referred to by him.

2. We are here, however, informed, verse 36, that they proceeded on their journey till "they came" *ἐπεὶ* *ad.* "UNTO a certain water." And it appears that it was the sight of this place of water, that suggested to the eunuch his immediate submission to the ordinance. "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" How unmeaning would this be if he had at hand the requisite water before!

3. If we admit that the eunuch was not previously provided with water, *now* when they were "come to a water," it would have been easy, and natural to be expected, for one of the attendants to have conveyed to him as much water as was required, without his, or Philip's proceeding farther. But, though "he commanded the chariot to stand still," no command is given upon this point,—of *bringing water* to him. But,

4. Leaving the chariot, verse 38, "they went

down INTO the water ;” εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, *in aquam*. Here the reader will remark, It was not sufficient to come *to* the water, which we are often told is all that the original means, for this they had done before ; but here is a second circumstance,—after they had come *to it*, they went down *into it*.

5. The inspired historian also adds, that it was not the eunuch *alone* that went into the water, but “they went down BOTH ;” and this is repeated again, as if to make doubting on this subject impossible, “both Philip and the eunuch.” Such was the mode of baptism ordained by the Son of God, that it could not, in this case, be administered unless Philip attended the eunuch *into* the water. And

6. While in this situation, both of them in the water, and surrounded therewith, “he baptized him ;” that is, if the word be translated, “he *immersed* him,” in the name of the TRI-UNE JEHOVAH. For this solemn act, the circumstances before noticed were *necessary* ; but for any other mode they would be absurd.

7. The sacred rite being performed, it is lastly added, “when they were come up, ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος OUT OF the water,” they were parted asunder ; probably to meet no more till they should enter the presence of Him to whom they now rendered this act of prompt and cheerful obedience.

It is not easy to imagine how the mode of this sacred ordinance could be more minutely described. That we have here an example of IMMERSION is allowed by the learned and candid of all denominations.

DR. TOWERSON. "For what need would there have been of Philip and the eunuch going down INTO this [water], were it not that the baptism was to be performed by immersion; a very little water, as we know it doth with us, sufficing for an effusion or sprinkling." *Pæd. Exam.*

CALVIN, in his comment on this place, observes, "Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water."

DR. DODDRIDGE. "They both went down to the water. Considering how frequently bathing was used in these hot countries, it is not to be wondered that baptism was generally administered by immersion, though I see no proof that it was essential to the institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose, that they went down to the water merely that Philip might take a little water in his hand to pour on the eunuch. A person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his baggage, on such a journey, through a desert country; a precaution absolutely necessary for travelers in those parts, and never omitted by them.—See Dr. Shaw's *Travels*, Preface. *Fam. Expos.* Note in loc. See numerous other authors in Booth's *Pæd. Exam.*

INFERENCE.—If I find ONE evident proof of the mode of baptism, as it was observed in the days of the apostles, whatever that mode may be, I infer that I have ascertained what was their invariable practice. Because it cannot be imagined that the apostles, having probably witnessed, and

certainly knowing well, the mode by which the Lord Jesus was baptized, and having all received the same instructions from their Lord and Master, could be divided either in sentiment or practice. And if immersion be proved in one case, and from thence it be granted that *Jesus* was *thus* baptized, and that *He commanded* the ordinance *thus* to be administered, would not the amiable and pious Doddridge, who grants that "baptism was *generally* administered by immersion," allow me to infer, from the authority of Christ's example and command, that this mode is "essential to the institution?" Here I have an instance of immersion, as admitted and allowed by the most eminent Pædobaptists; and from this instance, nothing elsewhere teaching otherwise, I am authorized to conclude, and I do it with the utmost confidence and satisfaction of mind, that *immersion was what Christ ordained*, and his obedient apostles and disciples *invariably practised*; and consequently, any departure from this practice, is a departure from the revealed will of Christ; and such an act can be viewed in no other light than an act of rebellion against his divine authority.

IV.—*The Baptism of Paul.*

Saul, while breathing out threatenings against

the disciples of Christ, is met, in his career of persecution, by the Lord himself, at whose exceeding glory he falls prostrate on the ground. Ananias, a devout disciple, is directed of God to go to him, and teach him what he is to do; and for his encouragement in visiting the persecutor, he is informed that Saul was praying, and that God had made him a chosen vessel to Himself.

Acts ix. 17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Chap. xxii. 14—16. And he said, the God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Chap. ix. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

The promptitude of Ananias in baptizing Saul, “who also is called Paul,” as soon as he had received the message from his Saviour, and the restoration of his sight, shows how strictly and promptly this ordinance was observed in the days of the apostles; and, consequently, how it should be observed to the end of time. Paul is exhorted to arise, and be baptized, and wash away his sins,

etc. He was to arise, and yield obedience to the command of Christ in baptism, and, at the same time that his body received the washing of water, he was to “call on the name of the Lord,” that his soul might be washed and purified by being, through faith, bathed in the “fountain opened for sin.” This spiritual purification, *immersion in water* would strikingly represent. Thus some of our eminent poets—

MILTON.—“—————Them who shall believe
 Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
 Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
 Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
 For death, like that which the Redeemer died.”
 Paradise Lost, book xii.

COWPER.—“There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
 And sinners *plunged* beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.”

In these instances we have the SPIRITUAL DESIGN of the ordinance very plainly referred to. “The meaning is not,” says an excellent writer, “as if remission of sins were obtained by baptism; but that, by means of the ordinance, they might be led to the sufferings, death, and bloodshed of Christ, *represented* in it.”

All our three inquiries are answered in the baptism of this illustrious man. 1. Respecting the *Person* to be baptized,—Paul was a *Believer*

in Christ. 2. To the *Mode*,—he himself refers when speaking of his baptism, and that of others, comparing it to *a burial*; “Therefore *we are buried with him by baptism.*” Rom. vi. 4; and, 3. The *Spiritual Design* is to represent a *washing away of sin*, obtained in “calling on the name of the Lord.”

V.—*The Baptism of Cornelius and his Friends.*

The next instance records the baptism of the first Gentiles received into the Christian Church. Cornelius was “a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house.” He is directed from Heaven to send for Peter the apostle; and previous to his coming, he called together his kinsmen and near friends. The apostle having taught them the leading doctrines of the gospel, concludes by repeating what Christ had commissioned his apostles to do as their first and chief work, and the testimony of the prophets concerning Him, in the two first verses below; after which we have the introduction of the ordinance.

Acts x. 42—48. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the

word. And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The order of the Commission is here also observed. Peter began by preaching; and not a word of baptism is heard, till the people had heard the gospel, and had given certain evidences of their conversion. Then, and not till then, Peter pleads for their baptism; and what should be particularly observed, he pleads for it upon the ground of their being, most evidently, true *believers*, and as having received the Holy Ghost. His language, in verse 47, implies, that if they did not appear to be regenerate persons, any one might object to their baptism; but, as they had given evidences that could not be disputed, he infers, no one could deny the propriety of their being baptized. Accordingly,

DR. HOLLAND had infallible authority for his observation. "In the first plantation of Christianity among the Gentiles, such only as were of full age, after they were instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, were admitted to baptism." *In Dr. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bapt.* Vol. II.

As to the *manner* in which those persons were

baptized, nothing is said of it by the sacred historian, beyond the simple fact. It has been suggested, however, that Peter, by the words, "Can any man forbid water," intimates that he required a little water to be brought to him, in a cup or basin, for the purpose of sprinkling; but the apostle neither speaks of little or much water, nor about bringing it, but simply of water, and, no doubt, he intended as much as the ordinance required. It is most improper to form conjectures upon inconclusive statements of Scripture, against that which, by other Scriptures, is evidently confirmed and established. When persons are said to be baptized, we are bound to infer that they were baptized according to the pattern and authority of Christ. This I conclude was the case in this, and in every other instance.

It is highly improbable, indeed, that Peter, receiving a cup of water, would command others to baptize, as he might himself administer in the same time that he was giving the instructions to another; and I should certainly think he would prefer doing so on so interesting an occasion, when the first fruits of the Gentile world were to be received into the Church. Instead of this, he assigns that office to some other person. To me, the idea of any man, servant or visitor, forbidding a cup of water to be brought, for the use of the

master of the house, at this interesting time, is most absurd, and never could have entered the apostle's mind. The meaning, I think, certainly is, Can any man forbid the use of water for the baptism of those persons to whom God has given, what is infinitely more important, the baptism of the Holy Ghost? In other words, *Can any one forbid their baptism?*

VI.—*The Baptism of Lydia and her Household.*

The three following instances, as they relate to *households*, are commonly urged in favor of infant baptism; and, indeed, as being the principal support of that practice in the New Testament. The reader will, therefore, the more particularly examine the Scriptures in reference to the persons that constituted the households, and if he find recorded the baptism of one infant, or any thing in the text which evidently indicates it, he will consider the point as settled in favor of infant baptism; but, if the texts do not contain such an indication of infants, but describe the baptized households as consisting of persons arrived at the years of understanding, and so capable of *hearing and believing the gospel*,—and especially if what is recorded implies that they actually did *hear and believe*, then it must be granted, that

believers' baptism receives all the support these instances afford. The *first* is of Lydia and her household.

PAUL, whose baptism we have already considered, was now become an apostle of Christ. He with Silas, and probably Luke, the writer of this history, were commissioned from heaven to proceed to Macedonia, and to Philippi, a chief city of it, to preach the gospel. Having arrived, they began their work in the following way, and with the following success:—

Acts xvi. 13—15, 40. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. And they, [that is, Paul and Silas, who afterward had been imprisoned at Philippi,] went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

LYDIA, herself, it is evident, had a right to be baptized, according to the order of Jesus Christ, being a *believer*. But of what, does it appear from the text, did her household consist? of children or grown persons? Before we answer this

question, we observe, there are *four things* which a Pædobaptist must admit and take for granted, before he can urge this place in his favor; but if he can *prove* none of them, his argument, to use the learned Limborch's phrase, "is good for nothing."

1. That Lydia had, at this time, or lately, a husband.

2. That she had children, and children then in infancy.

3. That these children were with her at Philippi.

4. That such children were actually baptized.

The whole of these admissions I strongly question; for—

The first is *improbable*; for, had she a husband, she was not likely to be thus engaged in business: and especially as no mention is made of him, though the apostles were repeatedly at her house.

The second is *uncertain*; because there are thousands of households in which there are no infant children.

The third is *incredible*; for if, as the text indicates, Lydia was come from Thyatira, a journey, including both sea and land, of probably not less than three hundred miles, *on business*, it is not to be believed she would bring young children with her, if she had any.

The fourth is *inconclusive*; because the word "household" or *house* is used in Scripture when the whole of the family is not included, but the principal part only. See 1 Sam. i. 21, 22.

The argument, therefore, for infant baptism, grounded upon the baptism of Lydia's household, is extremely weak, as there is *no evidence she had either husband or children*; and certainly before any such practice can from this be supported, as an ordinance of the New Testament, it ought to be *undeniably proved* from the text, that she had infant children, and that they were actually baptized.

Should it be replied, in favor of infant baptism, that Lydia at this time was probably *a resident* at Philippi, although originally from Thyatira, and that consequently her infant children must be with her,—this I would answer, by asking, Must not then her husband be with her? But this evidently was not the case, for—if Lydia had a husband with her, he surely must be *one* of the "household,"—if he were one included in this household, he must have been *baptized*, because the household was,—if he were baptized and joined in the same union with Paul and Silas as Lydia, would she say, "Come into *my* house?" or would Luke say "they entered into the house of *Lydia*," supposing there was a believing husband at the

head of the family? Impossible. The language employed by the inspired historian evidently implies, *a single female at the head of a house, and at the head of a business*: and the fair conclusion is, that her household were her servants; or, if her children, that her husband was deceased, and her children so far advanced in life as to join her in her journey, her business, and her worship; and thus they would be capable of instruction, faith, and baptism, as Christ commanded; and as is in effect plainly stated of the household in the next section.

But, more satisfactory to the pious reader than a thousand groundless surmises, the question of Lydia's household may be answered, with the greatest probability, from the last verse above cited. Paul and Silas, being delivered from prison, and *quitting the jailor's house and family*, according to his own request, verse 34, 36, they "entered into the house of Lydia;" and the reader will observe, this was the only other Christian house in the city, and in this family the only other persons baptized; and here, undoubtedly, they would meet with her "household" which they had baptized. Having entered, we read, "when they had seen *the brethren*, they *comforted* them, and departed." If then Lydia's household be denominated "brethren," and were capable of being

“comforted” by the word, they must have been *believers in Christ*.

DR. WHITBY seems to consider this unquestionable. “And when she, and those of her household, *were instructed* in the Christian faith, and in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized and her household.” *Paraphrase* on the place.

LIMBORCH. “An undoubted argument, therefore, cannot be drawn from this instance, by which it may be demonstrated that infants were baptized by the apostles. It might be that all in her house were of a mature age; who, as in the exercise of a right understanding they believed, so they were able to make a public profession of that faith when they received baptism.” *Comment* in loc.

MR. T. LAWSON, referring to this argument, says, “Families may be without children; they may be grown up, etc. So it is a wild inference to ground infant baptism upon.” *Baptismologia*.

ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES. “*Of the city of Thyatira*.—A city of Asia—here dwelt Lydia, that devout servant of God.” “*And entered into the house of Lydia*: doubtless to confirm them in the faith which they had preached to them.—Lydia and HERS, hearing of their miraculous deliverance, could not but be *comforted* and confirmed in the truth.” *Annot.* on Acts xvi. 14, 40.

The place at which Lydia was taught and baptized must have been remarkably convenient for immersion. The people were “by a river side,” verse 13, and at a place frequented by the Jews for religious purification by washing in the water. Thus—

DR. DODDRIDGE. "On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the side of the river Strymon, where, according to the custom of the Jews, there was an oratory, or a place of public prayer."—"It is certain that the Jews had a custom of building their oratories or proseuchas, or places of public prayer, by the sea-side, or near rivers, for the sake of purification." *Fam. Expos.* on the place.

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY. "Although the baptism practised by John, and by the apostles, did not, in all its circumstances, resemble those Jewish washings to which I have now adverted; yet it was precisely similar to them in that main particular of IMMERSION in water." *Observ. on the Pecul. of Friends.*

INFERENCE.—If the inspired word which records the baptism of Lydia and her household and subsequently refers to them, is to be my only guide upon the inquiries before us, I must infer, "that they were all believers in Jesus, and were baptized as their Saviour ordained."

VII.—*The Baptism of the Philippian Jailor and Household.*

PAUL and Silas, having been cast into prison at Philippi, were delivered from their confinement at midnight, by the miraculous interposition of God. An earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, the doors of it were opened, and the prisoners' bands loosed. The jailor, suspecting the escape of the prisoners, drew his sword to destroy himself,

but which Paul prevented by assuring him the prisoners were all there. Then follow his conversion and baptism :—

Acts xvi. 29—34. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Here observe, 1. The jailor bringing Paul and Silas out of the prison, being persuaded that they were the servants of the true God, and were now delivered by his power from their unjust and cruel punishment; and, deeply convinced, at the same time, of his own guilt and danger, urges them to tell him what he should do to be saved? To this greatest of questions, he received a direct answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." It is probable that the jailor's family, alarmed at this awful event, ran to his assistance, as they would consider his life imminently in danger, both by the prisoners in order to escape, and especially by the law, if any had fled. Hence Paul indi-

rectly spake to the whole, Believe, and thou shalt be saved, yea, and thy house too, in the same way.

DR. DODDRIDGE. "*Thou shalt be saved and thine house.* The meaning cannot be that the eternal salvation of his family could be secured by *his faith*; but that, if they also themselves believed, they should be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself; which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable that many of them, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon." *Fam. Expos.* Note on the place.

2. We may next learn from the text, in the most satisfactory manner, of what the jailor's household consisted; that they were not infants, or persons so young as to be incapable of being taught the gospel, and of believing it; for thus we read, verse 32, "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, *and to ALL that were in his house.*" This household is *instructed*, instructed ALL, and then baptized. Infants, therefore, cannot be here included.

3. Luke further describes the jailor and his household, and shows thereby how the Lord's commission was still strictly obeyed. Paul and Silas first preached the gospel to the whole house, as observed above; and now we read, verse 34, the jailor "rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." Then it follows he had

no infant children, or those words cannot include them, for of this faith they would be incapable.

MATTHEW HENRY says, "The voice of rejoicing, with that of salvation, was heard in the jailor's house, *He rejoiced believing in God, with all his house*: there was NONE in his house that refused to be baptized, and so made a jar in the harmony, but *they were unanimous* in embracing the gospel, which added much to the joy." *Expos. on the place.*

CALVIN. "Luke commends the pious zeal of the jailor, because he dedicated his whole house to the Lord; in which, also, the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the WHOLE FAMILY to a pious consent. *Comment. in loc.*

INFERENCE.—As the same pre-requisites to baptism are here specified in relation to the jailor's family as to himself, namely, 1st, that the word of the Lord was spoken to them as to him; and, 2d, that he and they equally believed in God; I must, on inspired authority, conclude that we have here nothing more nor less than a plain example of a believing household baptized, the whole being equally disciples of Christ; and as to the mode, that it was what the Lord sanctioned by his example and command, and nothing different therefrom.

Some, in opposing the practice of immersion, have imagined great difficulties in this case. They cannot conceive where the jailor could find a suitable place, and especially in the night, to

receive the ordinance in this form. It is not for us, at this distance of time, *to state the place*, as the sacred historian has not done so. The Scriptures affirm that "he and his were baptized : " what do these words mean ? We reply from the sense of the word, and from the other scriptures, "they were immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus." Then it falls to the part of our opponents to prove that they were not baptized in this way. These imagined difficulties have not a particle of weight upon the mind that admits that Christ's authority was Paul's only guide. It may not be improper, however, to remind the reader how exceedingly common the practice of cold bathing was, and still is, in the East. That frequent bathing was usual among the Grecians, Romans, and now is in Turkey, in which country this city Philippi stood, is testified by

LORD BACON. "It is strange that the use of bathing, as a part of diet, is left. With the Romans and Grecians it was as usual as eating or sleeping ; and so it is amongst the Turks at this day." *In Stennet's Answer to Addington.*

GROTIUS, the most learned and best informed man in Europe in his time, held it highly probable, from the practice of the country, that the jail at Philippi was provided with baths [as is now the case in Calcutta] which would admit of the ordinance in this form without delay. All

I contend for is, that if immersion was Christ's baptism, the apostles never violated his will in their practice.

VIII.—*Paul baptizing at Corinth.*

The next instance is the baptism of several persons at Corinth, where we now find the same apostle exerting himself to the utmost for the spread of the Messiah's kingdom. Here, though many opposed themselves and blasphemed, yet he zealously persevered, and his labors were crowned with success; for thus we read:—

Acts xviii. 4—8. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the Synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

A church being formed in this place, Paul afterwards writes them two epistles. In the first of these he laments the unhappy divisions that prevailed amongst them, in contending for different ministers, as if they had so many Saviours, and had been baptized in their separate names. Upon which he reasons:—

1 Cor. i. 13—17. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God

that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus : besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

Chap. xvi. 15. Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

Paul, at Corinth, as at all other places, begins his work by "testifying" to the people "the things concerning Jesus Christ," and by teaching, not by baptizing, he makes disciples to Christ. He continued his labors at Corinth a year and six months, in which time, "many hearing" his preaching, "believed, and were baptized." He himself baptized but few, namely, Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas; and in this he afterwards rejoiced, as none of them, in their angry contentions and excessive partiality, could say, "they were of Paul, for Paul baptized them, and that in his own name;" for, he adds, the first and chief work for which Christ sent him was, "not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."

It is not said, the household of Crispus were baptized, though, had it been so, it is certain they were proper subjects of the ordinance, agreeably to the words of the institution; for he "believed on the Lord, *with all his house.*" Their

baptism, if obedient to Christ, was a matter of course.

The persons who composed "the house of Stephanas," the last household said to be baptized, are not described where their baptism is recorded; and had nothing, in any other place, been said of them, this would have been the only house left in such uncertainty; but, as if it were the design of the Holy Spirit to leave no room for dispute, as to the proper persons to receive the ordinances of Christ, we find this family also described at the end of the epistle, as cited above: they were the "first fruits" of the word of God in Achaia, and "they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." They were the first Christian converts in their district, and they exerted themselves in acts of zeal and charity in reference to their fellow, but poorer, or more afflicted disciples; and hence, we scarcely need add, could not be infant children.

DR. DODDRIDGE. "*They have set themselves, etc.* This seems to imply, that it was the generous care of the whole family to assist their fellow Christians; so that there was not a member of it which did not do its part." *Fam. Expos.* Note on the place.

DR. GUISE. "It therefore seems that the family of Stephanas were all adult believers, and so were baptized on their own personal profession of faith in Christ." *On the place.*

DR. HAMMOND. "I think it unreasonable that the apostle's bare mention of baptizing his (Stephanas') household, should be thought competent to conclude that infants were baptized by him; when it is uncertain whether there were *any such at all* in his house." *Pæd. Exam.*

DR. MACKNIGHT. "The family of Stephanas seem all to have been adults when they were baptized, for they are said, chap. xvi. 15, to have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints." *Apos. Epist.* Note on 1 Cor. i. 16.

We have now found the record of three households baptized by the apostle Paul, or Silas, his companion—Lydia's, the jailor's, and Stephanas'. If it were the constant practice of the apostles to baptize children with their parents, as our Pædobaptist friends maintain, we should reasonably have expected, and, no doubt, should have found, in various places of Scripture, after naming the baptism of believers, the words added, "and their children," or "and their little ones," as families of young children are expressed in the old Testament. And I infer that this must have been a fact in *many* instances, because we find in this book *many thousands* of adults believing and being baptized, or added to the Lord. See Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, v. 14, etc. Would it, then, be probable that *three* families only would be specified AS FAMILIES, while *hundreds*, or, it may be, *thousands of other families*, are not referred to in the most distant way? This, I conceive, next to im-

possible ; and, therefore, infer that the baptism of *families* was comparatively of rare occurrence.

But, in these three cases, we have not the words "and their little ones ;" nor yet "and their children," and this expression might be used without necessarily implying infants ; but the term "house" or "household" is used, which conveys no idea as to THE AGE of the persons intended ; nor whether they were the children or the servants of the heads of the families ; and, therefore, had nothing been said descriptive of them, it would have been exceedingly inconclusive to have inferred a precedent for infant baptism from the use of the word household ; because there are thousands, yea, millions of families that have no infant children. The writer of this volume has baptized households ; and, among others, a "Lydia and her household," and yet never baptized any but professed believers. From the word "household," therefore, to infer the baptism of infants is completely begging the question. But, as my reader has seen, there is something said of these three households, which indicates the constituents of them : from this it is *demonstrably certain*, the jailor's and Stephanas' were professedly believers in Christ ; for that which is said of them is of infants *impossible*. And as to Lydia's, if "the brethren" Paul

and Silas “comforted” in her house were her household, and there were no other Christians in the city but the family they had just quitted, there is no more uncertainty respecting them. Thus while households out of number are referred to in the Scriptures, and nothing is added by which we could learn of what they consisted, it has pleased God to give such information of the *baptized households* as to lead the reader to infer, that they all were, as the same apostle testifies of the church of which Stephanas and his household were members, “called of God to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,” 1 Cor. i. 9.

The eminent Pædobaptist writers I have cited candidly allow that the *Scriptures*, regarding these households, teach nothing further upon our inquiries than what I have endeavored to make plain to the reader. To his own judgment I cheerfully leave the decision.

IX.—*Certain Disciples at Ephesus Baptized.*

This is the ninth and last place, in the Acts of the Apostles, relative to our present inquiries. The question whether the persons here referred to were baptized twice, first with John’s baptism, and now Christ’s, does not affect the object of our inquiries.

Acts xix. 1—7. Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

That in the case of these persons we have an example of adult baptism is clear; for, 1. They are called "disciples." 2. They "believed." 3. They "received the Holy Ghost." 4. They "spake with tongues and prophesied;" and were in number twelve *men*. We need not, therefore, add another word respecting them.

We have now, Christian reader, passed through all the Acts of the Apostles, and examined all the instances of the administration of this ordinance recorded in this sacred history; and to this place, we can confidently assert, *That we have nowhere found a single place or passage that describes, records, or implies the baptism of any infant.* The reader will not suppose this a hasty conclusion, when he hears the following Pædobaptists:—

DR. GOODWIN. "Baptism supposes regeneration sure in itself first. Sacraments are never administered to *begin*, or *work* grace. Read ALL the Acts, still it is said, they *believed*, and *were baptized*."

MR. T. BOSTON. "There is no example of baptism recorded in the Scriptures, where any were baptized but such as appeared to have a saving interest in Christ." *Works*.

LIMBORCH. "There is no instance can be produced, from which it may indisputably be inferred that any child was baptized by the apostles." *Complete Syst. Div. B. V. Ch. xxii.*

BAXTER. "I conclude, that all examples of baptism in Scripture do mention only the administration of it to the professors of saving faith; and the precepts give us no other direction. And I provoke Mr. Blake, as far as is seemly for me to do, to name *one precept or example* for baptizing any other, and make it good if he can." *Disput. of Right to Sacram.*

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM AS TAUGHT IN THE EPISTLES.

We now proceed to examine those passages in the Apostolical Epistles which refer to this ordinance.

I.—*Passages which contain an express allusion to the Mode, and the Spiritual design of Baptism.*

Rom. vi. 3—5. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection.

Colos. ii. 12. Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *Him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.

The object of the apostle Paul in these texts, and their connection, is to show the churches to which he is writing, the necessity of a holy walk and conversation. To this end he puts them in mind of their baptism, the profession they made

in it, and the obligation they took upon themselves to live according to the truths symbolically taught by the ordinance. "Know ye not," says he to the Romans, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ," into his religion or church, "were baptized into his death," into a reliance upon, and conformity to his death, the great design of which was to take away sin; and, consequently, as our Lord died, and was *buried* on account of it, so should we die and be *buried* to the love and practice of it. Then follows this plain and striking allusion to the particular *act* by which the rite in question is administered, in verse 4, which, with the same allusion in the Epistle to the Colossians, reads to this effect:—

"*Therefore*, that is, to express this very design, *we are buried by and in baptism*, with Christ our Lord; and as *He was raised up* from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we at our baptism, *wherein* we likewise are *raised up* to walk thenceforth in newness of life; and this is not of ourselves, but *through the faith* of the operation of God, who thus raised up his Son from the sepulchre to live and reign forever."

In these places the apostle twice describes baptism as effecting a *burial* and a *resurrection*, and as such to be a continued representation of the burial and resurrection of Christ, our

Pattern and Lord; and this is realized only in immersion.

By these plain allusions to the *mode* of the ordinance, the sense of the word baptize is most plainly confirmed; and the necessity of "going down into, and coming up out of the water," of "baptizing in the Jordan," and where "there was much water;" is here evidently explained. Pædobaptist divines, of the greatest celebrity for learning, have frankly allowed what we have here asserted. We have no difficulty but in making such a selection as would be most useful to the reader. The following are from different denominations of Christians, and the most competent that could be produced.

DR. WALL, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, and author of that famous work, "The History of Infant Baptism," for which he received the thanks of the whole Episcopal clergy in Convocation. "As to the manner of baptism then generally used, the texts produced by every one that speaks of these matters, John iii. 23; Marki. 5; Acts viii. 38; are undeniable proofs that the baptized person went ordinarily into the water, and sometimes the Baptist too. We should not know from these accounts, whether the whole body of the baptized was put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs, which seem to me to *put it out of question*.—*One*, that St. Paul does twice, in an allusive way of speaking, call baptism a BURIAL. *The other*, the custom of the Christians in the near succeeding times, which being more largely and particularly delivered in books, is KNOWN to have been generally, or ordinarily, a TOTAL IMMERSION." *Defence of the Hist. of Inf. Bap.*

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON. "Anciently, those who were baptized, were immersed and BURIED in the water, to represent their death to sin; and then did rise up out of the water, to signify their entrance upon a new life. And to these customs the apostle alludes, Rom. vi. 2—6." *Works*, Vol. I. Serm. vii. p. 179.

ARCHBISHOP SECKER. "BURYING, as it were, the person baptized in the water, and raising him out again, WITHOUT QUESTION, was anciently the more usual method; on account of which, Saint Paul speaks of baptism as representing both the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and what is grounded on them,—our being dead and buried to sin, and our rising again to walk in newness of life." *Lect. on Catechism*, L. xxxv.

DR. NICHOLSON, (Bishop of Gloucester.) "In the grave with Christ we went not; for our bodies were not, could not be buried with his; but *in baptism*, by a kind of analogy or resemblance, while our bodies are under the water, we may be said to be BURIED with him." *Expos. of the Church. Catechism*, p. 174.

DR. WHITBY, (Author of a Commentary on the new Testament, and more than forty other learned works.) "It being so expressly declared here, Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, that we are BURIED with Christ in Baptism, by being buried under water; and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; and *this immersion being religiously observed by ALL CHRISTIANS FOR THIRTEEN CENTURIES*, and approved by our Church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church, being that which the Romanist still urges to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity; it were to be wished, that this custom might be again of general use, and aspersion only permitted, as of old, in case of the Clinici, or in present danger of death." *Note on Rom. vi. 4.*

REV. RICHARD BAXTER, the most eminent Nonconformist of his age. "Therefore, in our baptism, we are dipped under the water, as signifying our covenant profession, that as He was buried for sin, we are dead and buried to sin; that as the glorious power of God raised Him from the dead, so we should rise to live to Him in newness and holiness of life." *Paraphrase on the New Testament*. On Rom. vi. 4.

DR. DODDRIDGE. "*Buried with Him in baptism*. It seems the part of candor to confess, that here is an allusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion, as most usual in these early times." *Fam. Expos.* Note on the place.

REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD. "It is certain that in the words of our text, Rom. vi. 3, 4, there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion, which is what our own church allows." *Eighteen Sermons*.

REV. JOHN WESLEY. "*Buried with Him*—alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." *Note on Rom. vi. 4*.

DR. CHALMERS, Professor of Theology in the University of Edinburgh. "We advert to this [the practice of immersion] for the purpose of throwing light on the analogy that is instituted in these verses. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Jesus Christ, by death, underwent this sort of baptism, even immersion under the surface of the ground, whence he soon emerged again by his resurrection. We, by being baptized into his death, are conceived to have made a similar translation: in the act of descending under the water of baptism, to have resigned an old life, and in the act of ascending, to emerge into a second or new life." *Lectures on the Epis. to the Romans*.

REV. ALBERT BARNES. "It is altogether probable that the apostle, in this place, had allusion to the custom of baptizing by immersion." *Note on the place*.

The apostle uses the figure of *planting*, as well as of *burying*, in allusion to baptism, "If we have

been planted together in the likeness of his death, we should be also in the likeness of his resurrection." This also agrees with the same *mode* of administering it; but with no other.

DR. MACKNIGHT. "*Planted together in the likeness of His death.* The burying of Christ, and of believers, first in the water of baptism, and afterwards in the earth, is fitly enough compared to the planting of seeds in the earth, because the effect in both cases, is a reviviscence to a state of greater perfection." *Note on Rom. vi. 5.*

ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES. "If we have been planted together," etc. "By this elegant similitude, the apostle represents to us, that, as a plant, that is set in the earth, lieth as dead and immovable for a time, but after springs up and flourishes, so Christ's body lay dead for a while in the grave, but sprung up and flourished in his resurrection; and we, also, when we are baptized, are *buried*, as it were, in the water for a time, but after are *raised up* to newness of life." *Annot. in loc.*

INFERENCE.—With certainty I gather from the Scriptures at the head of this section, That the outward form of baptism in the apostolic age was a *burial in water*. It is made infinitely interesting to the heart of a Christian, by that which it was intended to represent, the death, burial, and resurrection of the Redeemer; and hence, too, I infer, the infinite and irresistible obligation the baptized person is under, to devote his life to that Lord to whose death and resurrection he is thus emblematically conformed in the baptismal rite:

and I see, also, in these verses, by what principle and power this is all to be realized, "through faith, which is of the operation of God." In none destitute of that living principle can this intention of the ordinance be fulfilled. If sprinkling were the mode, and infants the subjects, these passages never could have been written. To the baptism of believers alone, and that administered by immersion, will these passages apply.

II.—*Occasional mention of Baptism.*

Eph. iv. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

1 Cor. xv. 29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

To the Ephesians and Corinthians, the apostle is recommending peace and union; that they should be all of one heart and mind, so that there be no schism in the body, as all were one in Christ. To urge which, he puts them in mind of what they had been uniformly taught, that there was but "*One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;*" and that they "all were baptized into *one body*, whether

Jews or Gentiles." We should here observe, that the apostle places *faith before baptism*, as Christ the great Lawgiver had done, *He that believeth, and is baptized.* "*One faith, one baptism.*" If this passage were to be expressed according to the general practice of the *present* day, the order both of Christ and the apostle must be "*reversed.*" The Rev. Charles Simeon admits this.

In the above verse to the Galatians, the apostle is thought to be alluding to the change of garments which must necessarily take place after the administration of the ordinance; to which, also, may allude the expressions, "putting off the old man with his deeds," and "putting on the new man," Eph. iv. 22, 24; Col. iii. 9, 10; and especially, as here, "putting on Christ," as "the Lord our righteousness."

DR. ADAM CLARKE. "When he [the person baptized] came up out of the water, he seemed to have a *resurrection* to life. He was, therefore, supposed to throw off his old Gentile state, as he threw off his clothes, and to assume a new character, as the baptized generally put on new or fresh garments." *Comment.* on Rom. vi. 4.

The last verse cited,—1 Cor. xv. 29, has obtained many interpretations, as the meaning of the apostle in the words "for the dead" is not certain.

DR. JOHN EDWARDS. "Some of the Fathers hold, that the apostle's argument in the text is of this sort: If there should be no resurrection of the dead hereafter, why is baptism so significant a symbol of our dying and rising again, and also of the death and resurrection of Christ?—The immersion into the water was thought to signify the death of Christ, and their coming out denotes his rising again, and did no less represent their own future resurrection." *In Stenuet's Answer to Addington.*

DR. MACKNIGHT. "Christ's baptism was—an emblem of his future death and resurrection. In like manner, the baptism of believers is emblematical of their own death, burial, and resurrection." *Apost. Epis. Note on Rom. vi. 4.*

INFERENCE.—*If faith preceded baptism in the apostles' days, and the persons who received that ordinance had imbibed the influence of that one Spirit, and had put on Christ as the robe of righteousness, the spiritual adorning of their souls, hoping for their part in the first resurrection at his appearing and glory, it is most manifest, that none but a genuine convert to Christ could thus be baptized, or enjoy such high and delightful privileges.*

III.—*Baptism illustrated by Events recorded in the Old Testament.*

These are the *last passages* we find in the New Testament which relate to the subject before us.

1. Cor. x. 1, 2. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The better to understand the apostle Paul in this first passage, the reader would do well to peruse the account, in the Old Testament, in Exod. xiv., to which he refers. In verse 22, we are told that the Israelites "went into the midst of the Red Sea upon dry ground," that the water divided, opening a passage for them, and forming "a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left." We also learn, that "the cloud" which had conducted them, now removed its situation, stood between the two armies, and concealed the Israelites from their enemies; that it was bright, and "gave light" to the former, while it was "darkness" toward the latter. It does not appear that any water actually touched the Israelites in any sense whatever; and hence, the word "baptized" must be used by the apostle in a figurative sense; and if it has a reference to the *mode*, we have only to ask, Does the situation of the Jews, "in the

cloud, and in the sea," best agree to sprinkling with water, or a total burial in it? Pædobaptists of the highest celebrity will answer:—

"WIRSIUS expounds the place to this effect. 'How are the Israelites baptized *in the cloud and in the sea*, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea, nor wetted by the cloud? It is to be considered, that the apostle here uses the term 'baptism,' in a figurative sense, yet there is some agreement to the external sign. The sea is water, and a cloud differs but little from water. The cloud hung over their heads, and the sea surrounded them on each side; and so the water in regard to those that are baptized.'" *Pæd. Exam.*

DR. WHITBY. "They were covered with the sea on both sides, Exod. xiv. 22; so that both the cloud and the sea had some resemblance to our being covered with water in baptism. Their going into the sea resembled the ancient rite of going into the water; and their coming out of it, their rising up out of the water." *Ibid.*

By the apostle Peter, we are taught that as Noah and his family "were saved by water," so baptism, the antitype of the water of the deluge, "now saves" the believer; not by washing his person, or a ceremonial purification, which cannot take away sin; but the water being a "like figure" in both cases; that is, *exhibiting Christ and his merits*, the believer is saved by *the sacred reality signified*. In this case, baptism is, "The answer of a good conscience toward God:" both the answer given to inquiry at baptism, and the subsequent testimony of the mind to God, are con-

scientious, being in accordance with a sincere and heartfelt faith in the merits of a dying and rising Saviour.

DR. OWEN. "I deny not but that there is a great analogy between salvation by the ark, and that by baptism, inasmuch as the one *did represent*, and the other *doth exhibit* Christ Himself." *On Hebrews*.

DR. MACKNIGHT. "This *answer of a good conscience* being made to God, is an *inward answer*, and means the baptized person's sincere persuasion of the things which, by submitting to baptism, he professes to believe; namely, that Jesus arose from the dead, and that at the last day He will raise all from the dead to eternal life, who sincerely obey Him." *Apost. Epist.* Note in loc.

INFERENCE.—If the exercise of "a good conscience" is associated with the ordinance of baptism, in none but a believer in Christ can this union be realized.

Having now, my reader, completed the chief design of this work in transcribing and laying before you every passage of this sacred volume that relates to the subject of our inquiry, and contains any information, whether on the *Subjects, Mode, or Spiritual Design* of baptism, I have, I humbly hope, fulfilled the task I have assumed, in presenting you with "THE SCRIPTURE GUIDE TO BAPTISM." Our Divine Master commanded us to "search the Scriptures," and it would meet with HIS gracious approbation if this plan were adopted, in reference to every subject pertaining to his

cause or kingdom. "To the word and to the testimony," is an inspired maxim in theology, and one from which no Protestant will dissent. "Ye do err," said the Redeemer, "not knowing the Scriptures."

We ought, therefore, now to be able to answer the inquiries proposed at the beginning:—

I. Who are proper *subjects* of Christian baptism, according to the authority of Christ, and the practice of his apostles?

Answer. We have met with the baptism of many thousands of persons, and the ordinance administered on many different occasions; but we have nowhere found, through all this sacred book, *any one person* baptized, Christ excepted, that we have the slightest reason to suppose, was not FIRST INSTRUCTED *in the doctrines of the gospel and had professed to BELIEVE*; but this is either expressly stated, or so implied of all, as to leave no just ground of dispute.

II. By what *mode* should the ordinance be administered?

Answer. We have nowhere met with a single verse, word, or circumstance which indicates the application of water by pouring or sprinkling; but wherever any thing is found descriptive of this ordinance, IMMERSION, as the word *baptism* unde-

niably signifies, is plainly implied in circumstances, and confirmed by allusions.

III. What is its *spiritual design*, and in whom is it realized ?

Answer. The passages before us plainly indicate, that it was the divine intention this ordinance should exhibit and teach the important change produced by the efficacy of grace on a sinner, namely *his PURIFICATION from sin*; his death and BURIAL as to the love and practice of it; his RESURRECTION to a new and religious life; the UNION and FELLOWSHIP into which *the Christian* enters with the Tri-une God; and *his RISING from the dead*, through his crucified and risen Lord, at his coming.

Here my pages might close: but when the subject of baptism was first brought under my own examination, and I had read with care these portions of Scripture; having been taught from early childhood to consider infant baptism of divine authority, I felt anxious to propose a few questions to those competent to answer me; and I conceive many inquirers on the subject may feel a similar solicitude. On those questions I have obtained satisfaction to my own mind; and, being desirous the reader, if disposed to propose the same questions, should enjoy the same satisfaction,

I shall write a few pages to the questions and answers as to me appear satisfactory. Whether the reader may consider them so or not, I leave to his own judgment and conscience, and to the influence of that Spirit whose office it is to "guide into all truth."

I shall support the *answers* by quotations from eminent Pædobaptist writers, as I have done my foregoing observations; and sometimes give such extracts alone as the best and most conclusive replies.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE GROUNDS AND SUPPOSED BENEFITS OF
INFANT BAPTISM.

Question 1. Although in the passages of Scripture you have cited, I have not found an express authority, either by *command* or *example*, for the baptism of infants, yet will Pædobaptist divines allow that no such authority is to be found in the New Testament?

Answer. BISHOP BURNET. "There is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for baptism of infants." *Expos. of the Articles*, Art. xxvii.

REV. SAMUEL PALMER. "There is nothing in the words of institution, nor in any after accounts of the administration of this rite, respecting the baptism of infants: there is not a single precept for, nor example of, this practice through the whole New Testament." *Answer to Dr. Priestley's Address on the Lord's Supper*.

LUTHER. "It cannot be proved by the sacred Scripture, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians AFTER the apostles." *Pæd. Exam.* See also Goodwin, Boston, Limborch, and Baxter, at the close of our second chapter.

2. What then are we to make of those words of our Saviour, and his subsequent conduct? Mark

x. 14, 16. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. And He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Answer. If, when the condescending Saviour took these children in his arms, it had been added, "and He baptized them," instead of the words "and blessed them," then this passage with propriety might be adduced; and, indeed, would have decided the question; but, as the Holy Spirit has recorded the circumstance, it no more refers to infant baptism than to infant communion, or infant circumcision. It is certain Christ did not baptize these children, for He never baptized at all, John iv. 2; and if his disciples, who baptized for Him and by his authority, had been commanded by their Lord to baptize infants, it is certain they would not have "rebuked" the parents or friends of these children for bringing them.

But this passage, by fair inference, and implication, contains an argument *against* infant baptism. Here you observe parents bringing their children to Jesus to crave his blessing upon them; or, at least, that He would "pray," Matt. xix. 13, that the blessing of heaven might attend them. Now let me ask, If baptism would have brought these children into the covenant of grace, or into Christ's church, or secured to them any spiritual benefit,

would the Lord Jesus have concealed that circumstance from these parents, and from his disciples? Would He take them in his arms and bless them, and give them back to the parents *without baptism*, and without a word upon that ordinance? Was it ever known that any spiritual benefit was sought from Him, and He did not bestow it? Here the spiritual good of these children was sought at his hands, and if baptism was the seal, the key, the door to all the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace as Pædobaptists often describe it, would the Lord Jesus refuse it,—or send them away without it? This is impossible; and therefore I infer that infant baptism is no part of the will of Christ; that it can communicate no good, and ought not to be observed. Some of the most learned Pædobaptists are aware that this passage serves not their cause. Thus:

POOLE'S CONTINUATORS. "We must take heed we do not found infant baptism upon the example of Christ in this text: for it is certain that He did not baptize these children. Mark only saith, He took them up in his arms, laid his hand on them, and blessed them." *Annot.* on the place, in Matt. xix. 14.

BISHOP TAYLOR. "From the action of Christ's blessing infants, to infer they are to be baptized, proves nothing so much, as that there is a want of better arguments; for the conclusion would with more probability be derived thus:—Christ blessed infants, and so dismissed them, but baptized

them not; therefore, infants are not to be baptized." *Liberty of Prophecy.*

3. If the New Testament does not afford an authority for infant baptism, upon what grounds do Pædobaptist divines practise and defend it?

Answer. DR. EDW. WILLIAMS, one of its most zealous advocates, affirms, "The champions for it, are by no means agreed upon this question, On what is the right of infants to baptism founded?" *Notes on Maurice's Social Religion.*

Their grounds are various and contradictory. The early fathers who practised it urged *the virtue* of the ordinance in taking away sin, and securing eternal life; adding, the certain ruin of those that neglected it.* The Church of Rome holds, "If any one shall say that baptism is—not necessary to salvation, let him be accursed."† The Greek Church, by Cyril, patriarch of Constantinople, affirms, "We believe that baptism is a sacrament appointed by the Lord, which except a person receive, he has no communion with Christ."‡ The Lutheran Church, and the Church of England, hold both the ordinances "as generally necessary to salvation." The former, agreeing with Calvin and Melancthon, "own a sort of faith in infants,"

* See Origen, Cyprian, and Ambrose in Dr. Wall's Hist. of Infant Baptism.

† Catechism of the Council of Trent.

‡ Confess. Christ. Fidei, cap. xvi.

affording them a right ; while the English Church hesitates not to baptize them, “ Because they [the infants] promise by their sureties” repentance and faith, “ which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.”*

Many learned writers, as well as churches, have expressed their views upon this inquiry. Dr. Wall, Dr. Hammond, and many others, hold that the practice of Jewish Proselyte baptism is the foundation of the Christian rite, and as infants received the former, so they should the latter : but Dr. Owen, Dr. Jennings, and others, have proved that no such practice existed among the Jews to afford such a pattern till generations after Christ.† Sir N. Knatchbull assumes *circumcision* as the proper foundation.—Beza, and after him Dr. Doddridge and others, considered the *holiness* of the children of believers, as making them proper subjects.‡ Matthew Henry and Dr. Dwight, contended that the profession of faith made by the parents to be their children’s right to baptism.§ Dr. H. F. Burder affirms “ The identical principle which pervades and unites the whole of the argument—is that infants are to be baptized SOLELY on the

* See Episcopal Church Catechism, and Pædobap. Exam.

† Dr. Judson’s Serm. on Christian Baptism.

‡ See Beza and Doddridge on 1 Cor. vii. 14.

§ Treatise on Baptism, and Dwight’s Theology on the subject.

ground of *connection with their parents*:" and adds, "it is a connection in the covenant of grace, the covenant of redemption, the everlasting covenant, embracing all that man can desire, or all that Jehovah can impart."* An anonymous writer affirms that "children by baptism are actually *brought into* the covenant of grace." This is denied by another, who replies that the "children of believers are really and truly in the covenant of grace *before* their baptism."† Such endless contrariety and absurdity are consequent upon having no Scripture authority.

4. Some of the grounds assumed by those churches and eminent men, appear to have weight. Does not the "holiness" referred to, existing in the children of believers, and founded on 1 Cor. vii. 14, afford the ground required? "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now they are holy." If *holy*, they are surely proper subjects of baptism.

Answer. So many good men have thought: but what is the holiness intended in the above passage? The apostle says, it results from an *unbeliever* being *sanctified*. Now this sanctification cannot

* Sermon of the Right of Infants to Baptism.

† In Pædobap. Examined.

be *spiritual*; for that is the work of the Holy Ghost upon the mind and heart, and in which an *unbeliever* has no share or part, Acts viii. 21. If attention be paid to the subject upon which the apostle is speaking, his meaning may be safely gathered. He is advising the Corinthians upon the question, Whether, if a husband or wife who is converted to Christ, has an unbelieving partner, either Jew or idolater, the believer should *separate from the connection?* as in Ezra x. 1-14. The apostle advises. If the unbelieving partner be pleased to dwell with the believer, the believer should not cause the separation. Then follows the passage before us, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife;" or, as Doddridge renders it, "is sanctified to the wife."

Now, in what sense can any thing or person, be *sanctified*, in which there is no moral, or spiritual holiness communicated, and the sanctification is not the work of the Holy Spirit? The Scriptures afford the reply: the temple, the altar, the offerings, the official garments, etc., under the law, were expressly said to be *sanctified*, when they were appointed by God's law, and set apart to certain specified purposes. Apply this to the subject before us. Marriage is an appointment of God; and when a man or woman enters into that contract, he or she, by God's law, is *set apart*, and,

in that sense, "sanctified," to stand in the relation of husband or wife; and hence the union is lawful, and pleasing to God, and shall continue to be so, though one of the parties shall be converted, and the other be an unbeliever.

If the word *holy* must be taken in a spiritual sense, and infant baptism inferred from it, the word *sanctified*, being evidently here of a kindred meaning, would unquestionably afford equal ground for the baptism of the unbelieving parent! Nor should it be forgotten that the word *children* in this place, as in Acts ii. 39, signifies *posterity* of any age, as well *grown up*, as in infancy. They ALL have the holiness which the apostle refers to; and if *any* have a right to baptism on this ground, *all* have; and hence the argument destroys itself. It may further confirm the sense we have given, to add, that Jewish writers inform us of the "ways and means by which *illegitimate children might be purified*, or legitimated;" in which the term *purity* or *holiness*, is used in precisely the same sense as that we have given to this passage of the apostle. See Dr. Gill on Deut. xxiii. 2.

Taking this to be the sense of the passage, the inference which the apostle draws from this sanctification, or appointment by divine law, is natural, "else were your children unclean, but now are

they holy ;” that is, If the union of the parents was not according to the law of God, your children would be the fruit of illicit connection ; but now, the union being in harmony with God’s will, they are free from the impurity of illegitimacy ; as in Deut. xxiii. 2. So some of the most able Pædobaptist writers understand the apostle.

MR. T. WILLIAMS. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the (believing) wife, etc., so that the connection is perfectly lawful, and the children are *legitimate*, or, in a ceremonial sense, *holy*.” *Cottage Bible*, on the place.

MELANCTHON, the Reformer. “The connection of the argument is this, ‘If the use of marriage should not please God, your children would be bastards, and so *unclean* ; but your children are not bastards, therefore the use of marriage pleaseth God.’ How bastards were unclean in a peculiar manner the law shows, Deut. xxiii.” *Pædobap. Exam.*

SUARES AND VASQUES. “The children are called *holy*, in a civil sense : that is, legitimate, and not spurious. As if Paul had said, ‘If your marriage were unlawful, your children would be illegitimate. But the former is not a fact ; therefore not the latter.’” *Ibid.*

CAMERO. “The holiness of which the apostle speaks, is not opposed to that impurity which by nature properly agrees to *all* on account of Adam’s offence, but to the impurity of which believing wives were apprehensive from their cohabiting with unbelieving husbands.” *Ibid.*

REV. ALBERT BARNES. “This passage has often been interpreted, and is often adduced to prove that children are ‘federally holy,’ and that they are entitled to the privilege of baptism on the ground of the faith of one of their parents. But against this interpretation there are insuperable objections.” *Note on the place.*

INFERENCE.—If the holiness, which is merely *legitimacy of birth*, is no title to baptism, then the passage we have considered favors not baptism of infants.

5. From this interpretation, it would appear that the children of believers are no better, or more *holy* by nature, than the children of unbelievers. Is this in accordance with the Scriptures?

Answer. Most unquestionably so. Thus Psalm li. 5, "Behold," saith the son of pious Jesse, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Eph. ii. 3. "We," says the apostle Paul, for himself and all the primitive Christians, "were BY NATURE the children of wrath, even as others." Romans v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Chap. iii. 9, 10, "What then, are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are ALL under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one." And our Saviour affirms, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Ye must be born again." John iii. 6, 7.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND. "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man; and therefore in

every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath." *Articles*, Art. ix.

MR. DORRINGTON. "Although the parents be admitted into the new covenant, the children born of them are not born within that covenant, but are, as all others, born in a state of rebellion and misery." *Vindication of the Church*.

DR. ADAM CLARKE. "All are born with a sinful nature,—there has never been one instance of an immaculate human soul [Christ excepted] since the fall of Adam. Through his transgression all come into the world with the seeds of death and corruption in their own nature; all are sinful—all are mortal—and must die." On Rom. v. 12, 13.

DR. DODDRIDGE. "As we ALL proceed from a corrupt original, we do not more evidently bear the image of the earthly Adam in the infirmities of a mortal body than in the degeneracy of a corrupted mind. *Fam. Expos.* John iii. 1–10.

No doctrine can be more dangerous, because calculated to be fatally delusive, than, That because persons are *born of pious parents*, they are therefore under some peculiar spiritual and advantageous distinction, on account of which they are entitled to sacred privileges, and do not need equally with others the same converting grace and mercy, and the same atoning sacrifice. John the Baptist applied the axe to the root of this tree, at the dawn of the Christian dispensation. "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." Ye are a "generation of vipers; Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" So the Redeemer, when the Jews uttered their usual boast "We be Abraham's seed,"

replied, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed. If God were your Father, ye would love me. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father, ye will do." John viii. 33, 37, 42, 44. Such is CHRIST's testimony of the seed of Abraham in their natural, unconverted state.

6. But it pleased the Almighty, as recorded in Gen. xvii. 1-14, to enter into a covenant with Abraham, the father of the faithful, in which *Abraham's seed* are included as well as himself: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." Now, *believers* in Christ are said in the New Testament, Gal. iii. 7, to be "the children of Abraham;" and if so, must not *they* be included in this covenant? and if they are, must not *their offspring* also, as the *seed* of "Abraham's children," be also included? Admitting this, surely, such offspring belong to the church of God, and therefore have a right to its ordinances.

Answer. As this is generally deemed the STRONGHOLD of infant baptism, my reply shall be a little more extended. To understand the subject, the reader should remark, that the Scriptures mention several covenants made by the Divine Being with men. Two only of these have

eternal life promised in them ; namely, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, The *first* of these was made with Adam as head of the human race, and which, in a few words, ran in this way, "Do this and live." This covenant of works was, in effect, renewed in the precepts of the moral law at Sinai, of which it was written, "The man that doeth those things shall live by them." Rom. x. 5 ; Lev. xviii. 5. The *second*, the covenant of grace, follows upon the failure of man to obtain eternal life by the former. This covenant is made in Christ Jesus, as the head and representative of his church, who performs the requirements of God in his people's behalf ; and to man runs in this way, "He that believeth shall have eternal life." John iii. 15, 16, 36 ; Acts xvi. 31 ; Rom. x. 4, 9. The blessings of this covenant have been enjoyed by every saved soul, since the beginning of the world. See Witsius upon this subject.

Now, the covenant made with Abraham was different from either of these, as was the covenant with Noah. It was a special covenant, limiting its benefits to Abraham and his descendants ; and these benefits were TWO-FOLD :—1. *Spiritual* and *internal*,—including justification by faith, and indeed all the benefits of the "covenant of grace." 2. *Temporal* and *worldly*,—including

an earthly kingdom, all the land of Canaan. Gen. xvii. 8. The first of these was in having Jehovah for "a God" in a *saving sense*, consequent upon "the righteousness of faith," and which Abraham and his believing descendants *only* enjoyed. The second was the gift of God to the whole nation, whether believers or unbelievers, and in which Jehovah was "a God" to them all in a special, providential, but *temporal sense*.

Thus Abraham's seed are exhibited under a *twofold description*, corresponding with these *twofold benefits* of the covenant; and the distinction is given in one word, "faith." Hear inspired authority upon this important point:—

Rom. ix. 6–8. "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: that is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." Chap. iv. 12. For He is the "father of the circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision *ONLY*, but who *ALSO* walk in the steps of the FAITH of our father Abraham." Gal. iii. 9. "So, then, they which be OF FAITH are blessed with faithful Abraham." The former of these were "justified by faith:" the latter, not having faith, are "not the children of God."

I now beg to inquire of those persons who found an argument for infant baptism on their being, together with their offspring, "the children of Abraham," and thereby in the covenanted

church of God, and entitled to its ordinances, *To which* of these classes of Abraham's seed do they profess to belong? To that which was of the flesh, and without faith,—or to that class which also possessed the faith of Abraham? If the *former*, they must be Jews, and not Christians. If the *latter*, we are all agreed; they are BELIEVERS, and have a right to be baptized according to the order of Christ.—“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”

The argument, therefore, founded upon the Abrahamic covenant for the baptism of infants, when not the *temporal* but the *spiritual* benefits of that covenant are the object desired,—and these spiritual benefits being promised only to *faith*, and enjoyed only by regenerate persons,—is unscriptural, unfounded, and absurd.

DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS exposes the absurdity of *hereditary interest* in the covenant of grace, in his Note on Maurice's *Social Religion*, in strong terms. “Our author takes considerable pains to maintain a favorite point, which I shall pronounce a very precarious hypothesis. It is that of *hereditary grace*, if I may so express the notion,—that all the children of the godly are absolutely interested in all new covenant blessings.—But that the interpretation of the Abrahamic promise, Gen. xvii. 7, which Mr. M. and some others have adopted, and which considers the words in their undistinguished application, is *replete with very absurd consequences*. Jehovah, surely, was not the God of Abraham and of his *unbelieving* descendants in the SAME respects.”

MATTHEW HENRY. "Grace doth not run in the blood, nor are saving benefits inseparably annexed to external church privileges; though it is common for people thus to stretch the meaning of God's promise to bolster themselves up in a vain hope. The children of the flesh, as such, by virtue of their relationship to Abraham—are not, *therefore*, the children of God." *Expos.* on Rom. ix. 6–13.

7. But, if this be admitted, did not circumcision bring those who received it into the covenant of grace?

Answer. No: in no case whatever. The covenant of grace, as Dr. Burder expresses it, is "the covenant of redemption, the everlasting covenant." Nothing can bring into that covenant but the grace of God in Christ Jesus. It existed from the beginning of time. Abel, Enoch, Noah, and, no doubt, thousands of others, though uncircumcised, enjoyed the blessedness of this covenant before Abraham was born. Circumcision, therefore, is no part of the "covenant of grace;" and that it did not bring Abraham into it is undeniably clear, for he enjoyed it and all its blessedness many years *before* circumcision was instituted; when he was, says the apostle, "not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." Rom. iv. 10. And that this rite did not bring *children* into the covenant of grace I have already proved.

8. In what sense, then, is circumcision "a seal

of the covenant of grace," if it had not this efficacy?

Answer. Common as it is to denominate circumcision *a seal of the covenant of grace*, it is nowhere so denominated in the word of God. In Rom. iv. 11, it is called "a seal of righteousness;" but except the whole verse be quoted, the sense of the apostle is entirely lost. The words are these: "And he" that is, Abraham, "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." In no other place is circumcision called *a seal*; and let my reader try, after carefully looking at the whole passage; to make this applicable to infants, or to infant circumcision or baptism, or to unbelievers in any case, if he can. He will remark,

1. Circumcision is here spoken of, not in reference to its general administration to the *Jewish nation*, but to Abraham in particular. 2. It is spoken of, not as it might be received by a person destitute of vital piety; for it is called "a seal of the righteousness of faith," etc. 3. It is not spoken of as sealing what was *in future* to be bestowed or enjoyed, but of a blessing long before possessed—"of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised."

I appeal to the serious judgment of the reader,

what a perversion of the sense of God's word it must be, to call circumcision, from this passage, "a seal of the covenant," thereby referring to the national administration of that rite to the Jews, and as sealing to them the blessings of salvation, when the apostle so guardedly expresses himself as sealing only what a *true and living faith* had previously obtained ! This passage can apply to none but Abraham, and those of his posterity, who, like their progenitor, possessed a justifying and saving faith.

VENEMA. "Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, as the apostle affirms; but this only in respect of such Israelites as were believers." *Pædobap. Exam.*

9. Why, then, was circumcision administered to infants at all ?

Answer. The intention of circumcision, in its national administration to all the males of Abraham's posterity, and those persons "bought with money" in the family of any Jew, and not to be neglected on pain of being "cut off from his people," whether believers or unbelievers, was *The separation of the Jewish nation* from all other nations of the world, in order that to them and by them, God might reveal Himself by means of the law and the prophets, preparatory to the gospel, that He might give them the land promised to their fathers, and preserve an unbroken

lineage from Abraham to Abraham's promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ.

WIRSIUS. "The descendants of Abraham were separated by circumcision from other nations, and renounced their friendship; as appears from the open declaration of the sons of Jacob, Gen. xxxiv. 14, 15. A circumcised person, say the Jews, "has withdrawn himself from the whole body of the nations." And, indeed, circumcision was a great part, and as it were *the foundation of the middle wall of partition.*" *Econ. of the Cov.*, Book iv. ch. 8, § 20.

DR. ERSKINE. "When God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed, circumcision was instituted for this, among other purposes, to show that descent from Abraham was the foundation of his posterity's right to those blessings." *Theolog. Dissertations.*

10. In what sense, then, are we to consider the Abrahamic covenant as continued into the gospel dispensation, and enjoyed by Christians?

Answer. So far as the Abrahamic covenant pertained to *external privileges* and a *worldly kingdom*, Christians have no interest in it, any more than those servants of God who lived before that patriarch; or Melchizedek and Lot, who lived at the same time. But so far as *spiritual benefits* are contained in that covenant, all God's people in all ages have enjoyed them; and Christians especially, in a more glorious form and measure, under the ministration of the Spirit and government of Christ. "My kingdom," said our Supreme Head, "is not of this world," but "is

within you." It is "in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." John xviii. 36; Luke xvii. 21; Rom. xv. 17; 2 Cor. iii. 7.

DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS. "New Testament saints have nothing more to do with the Abrahamic covenant than the Old Testament believers who lived prior to Abraham."

11. Is there, then, nothing *typical* in the rite of circumcision?

Answer. In replying to this question, it is my happiness to be able to refer my reader to an authority, which, as a Christian, he will esteem decisive and infallible. Circumcision was a type, but not of baptism, but of "*the circumcision of the heart*," and "*the putting off the sins of the flesh*." And this blessed work is accomplished, not on babes in age, but "*babes in Christ*;" born from above, and children of God. Hear the infallible authority to which I refer, Rom. ii, 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew," an Israelite indeed, "which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision," in God's ultimate design, "which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is *that of the heart*; in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

12. According to this, baptism was not instituted *in the room* of circumcision, so as to become its antitype, and fulfillment, and consequently to supersede it?

Answer. It is certain that was not the case. 1st, Because when the apostles and elders were assembled at Jerusalem to consider the question, Whether those who were turned to God from among the Gentiles should be circumcised? Acts xv., not a word was said about the end and fulfillment of the Jewish rite in the Christian; and had this been the known appointment of Christ, this must have been the decision of the subject. 2d, Because, had this been the appointment of the Saviour, it would have been an affront to his authority to continue circumcision for another day after he had substituted baptism in its place; but circumcision was observed, even by the Apostle Paul, long after Christ had instituted the New Testament rite. See Acts xvi. 3. This would have been a similar impropriety to the offering of “a sacrifice for sin” according to the law of Moses, after Christ had “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself!”

The absurdity of urging the baptism of infants from the institution of circumcision, will appear by observing,—1st, That *male children only* were to receive that rite; and 2d, That *men servants*

and *slaves* were equally commanded to be circumcised when the master was, and that upon pain of being cut off, or put to death. If that divine command, therefore, be applied as descriptive of the subjects of baptism, it will equally require the baptism of servants and purchased slaves, willing or unwilling, as well as of infants; and it would *restrict* the Christian ordinance to the male sex alone. This being so plainly contrary to the revealed will of Christ on baptism, proves the fallacy of the doctrine.

In the word of God I see no connection or resemblance between circumcision and baptism, except that they were both *initiatory ordinances*: the one into the body politic of Israel, the subjects of which rite are all the male inhabitants—the other into the body of Christ, which is his church, and the subjects of which are all believers in him. To this the apostle seems to refer in Col. ii. 11–13.

13. As you allow that circumcision was *a seal* in reference to Abraham as a believer; is not baptism equally a seal under the New Testament, in a believer's case?

Answer. If it be so, it must be understood in the same sense in which the apostle expressed it in the case of the patriarch; and then it would be a seal of the righteousness of the faith which the

believer had, yet being unbaptized. But we cannot do better than allow the New Testament to answer our inquiries; and here I am nowhere taught that any external ordinance is a seal of the covenant of grace, but most plainly instructed, in beautiful harmony with the *Spiritual nature* of the Messiah's kingdom, that *the work of the Spirit* on the heart is the only seal of that covenant.

2 Cor. i. 22. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Eph. i. 13. "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

Eph. iv. 30. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

DR. CHARNOCK. "God seals no more than He promises. He promises only to faith, and therefore only seals to faith. Covenant graces, therefore, must be possessed and acted, before covenant blessings be ratified to us." *Works*, Vol. II.

VITRINGA. "The sacraments of the New Covenant are of such a nature, as to seal nothing but what is *spiritual*, nor to be of any advantage, except in regard to those who really believe in Jesus Christ." *Pæd. Exam.*

14. How, then, is the doctrine of the Church of England to be understood, by which we are taught, that a child by baptism is "regenerated," and is "incorporated," and "grafted into the body of Christ's church;" and in another place,

“made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?”

Answer. To support this doctrine by any thing said in the Scripture of this ordinance is impossible: to make it agree with the analogy of faith, as taught by the concurring testimony of the whole of divine revelation, is equally impossible. What is here attributed to baptism, the Scriptures ascribe only to the omnipotent agency of the HOLY GHOST, and to the infinite efficacy of the REDEEMER'S CROSS! See 1 Pet. i. 2, 18–23; iii. 18. Baptism, in the formula of that church, is said to do what nothing short of the power and grace of God is able to perform; and that children, as they advance in life, should be taught to *believe* such a doctrine, and to consider themselves in the possession of such spiritual advantages, merely by having received this external rite, destitute as it is of all saving efficacy, is inexpressibly lamentable and dangerous; because it may prove, as it is fitly calculated to be, *fatal to their souls!*

“DR. OWEN observes, ‘That the father of lies himself could hardly have invented a more pernicious opinion’ than that which connects regeneration with baptism.” *Pædobap. Exam.*

REV. JOHN HYATT says, “If the church of Christ is his body, and every real believer is a member of that body, how important the question, Are we members of the body of

Christ? Millions have been taught to say, that in baptism they were made members of Christ, who have given indubitable proofs that they uttered falsehood!! The members of the body of Christ are united to Him as a head; and there are no dead, no unsanctified members. All are useful, active, and obedient. Beware of deception—beware of substituting the name for the reality—the form of godliness for the power. Surely, licentious characters cannot presume that they are members of the mystical body of the Son of God. A holy head, and impure members; a pure fountain, and corrupt streams; a good tree, and bad fruit; these are anomalies. If you are united to Him, you are of one spirit with Him.”
Sermons on various Subjects.

15. But if infants are not to be received into the church by baptism, should they die in infancy, is not their salvation endangered?

Answer. By no means. How can the want of *that* endanger their salvation which God hath nowhere enjoined or required? Did not our Lord receive *unbaptized* children into his arms when on earth, and bless them, and send them away unbaptized; and without uttering a word about baptism? And who, then, will say that baptism is necessary that He should receive them to Himself in heaven; especially when they remember his gracious declaration in reference to these *unbaptized children*, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven?” See Matt. xviii. 1–4, xix. 14.

Persons dying incapable of faith in Christ, are without doubt saved, not by water nor by the

work of man ; but by the blood of Christ, and by the power of the Spirit. In like manner, persons dying in faith, but having no opportunity of being baptized, as the penitent on the cross, are saved by the same infinitely efficacious, and the *only* sufficient means.

If we do for our children what God hath required, we shall find this quite sufficient, without attempting to do what God hath not required. And should it please God to remove them from us in infancy, it is better to commit their souls to the merits of Christ, than to the unauthorized application of water to their bodies. The former we are sure saves ; 1 John i. 7. And we are equally sure baptism cannot save ; Acts viii. 13, 23 ; and is not essential to salvation, Luke xxiii. 43. To apply baptism for salvation, therefore, is making a false Saviour of the ordinance, and implies a criminal unbelief in the all-sufficiency of Christ.

16. Admitting the want of Scripture authority for infant baptism, on what other authority is it supposed to have been founded ?

Answer. Some have urged in its behalf Apostolical tradition ; and others, the decrees of Episcopal Councils. Higher authority it has not ; and neither of these can Protestants admit.

DR. FIELD. "The baptism of infants is therefore named a *tradition*, because it is not expressly delivered in Scrip-

ture that the apostles did baptize infants; nor any express precept there found that they should do so." *On the Church.*

BISHOP PRIDEAUX. "Pædobaptism rests on no other divine right than *Episcopacy*." *Fascicul Controv.* Loc. iv. § iii.

In the edict drawn up in the year 1547, by command of Charles V., Emperor of Germany, to allay disputes between the Romanists and the Reformers, *tradition* is expressly stated as the ground of infant baptism: "Habet præterea Ecclesia traditiones, &c. Hujus generis sunt baptismus parvulorum et alia;" that is, "The church, moreover, has traditions handed down to these times from Christ and the apostles, through the hands of the bishops: which whoever would overturn, he must deny the same (viz. the church) to be the pillar and ground of truth. Of this sort are the baptism of little ones, and other things." *Dr. Ryland's Candid Statement.*

17. If this be granted, when was infant baptism supposed to be introduced?

Answer. There is no certain evidence of it earlier than the beginning of the third century after Christ. At that period it was practised in Africa, and is mentioned, for the first time, by Tertullian, about the year 204, in his work entitled "De Baptismo," from which I shall quote hereafter.

CURCELLEUS, a learned divine of Geneva, and Professor of Divinity. "The baptism of infants, in the two first centuries after Christ, was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth was allowed by some few. In the fifth and following ages it was generally received. The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born. In the former ages, no trace of it appears,

and it was introduced without the command of Christ." *Pæd. Exam.*

SALMASIUS AND SUICERUS. "In the two first centuries no one was baptized, except being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer; because of those words, He that believeth, and is baptized." *Ut supra.*

VENEMA. "Tertullian has nowhere mentioned Pædobaptism among the traditions or customs of the church, that were publicly received, and usually observed. For in his book, *De Baptismo*, he dissuades from baptizing infants, and proves the delay of it to a more mature age is to be preferred. Nothing can be affirmed with certainty, concerning the custom of the church before Tertullian, seeing there is not any where, in more ancient writers, that I know of, undoubted mention of infant baptism."

The passage alluded to, containing the FIRST MENTION of infant baptism, is the following:—

TERTULLIAN. "Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est; præcipue tamen circa parvulos. Quid enim necesse est sponsores etiam periculo ingeri? Quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt, et proventu malæ indolis falli. Ait quidem Dominus, *Nolite illos prohibere ad me venire.* Veniant ergo dum adolescent, veniant dum discunt, dum quo veniant docentur: fiant Christiani, dum Christum nosse potuerint. Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum? Cautius agetur in secularibus; ut cui substantia terrena non creditur, divina credatur. Norint petere salutem, ut petenti dedisse videaris. . . . Si qui pondus intelligant baptismi, magis timebunt consecutionem quam dilationem: fides integra secura est de salute." *De Baptismo. cap. xviii.*

For the benefit of our unlearned reader we will give a translation of this passage :—

“The delay of baptism, therefore, may be more advantageous, either on account of the condition, disposition, or age of any person; especially in reference to little children. For what necessity is there that the sponsors should be brought into danger? because either they themselves may fail of the promises by death, or be deceived by the growth of evil dispositions. The Lord, indeed, says, *Do not forbid them to come to me.* Let them, therefore, come when they are grown up; when they can understand; when they are taught whither they are to come. Let them become Christians when they can know Christ. Why should this innocent age hasten to the remission of sins? Men act more cautiously in worldly things; so that divine things are here intrusted with whom earthly things are not. Let them know how to seek salvation, that you may appear to give to one that asketh.—If persons understand the importance of baptism, they will rather fear the consequent obligation than the delay: true faith alone is secure of salvation.”

Now I request my reader to observe—1. That there is confessedly no mention of infant baptism in the writings of any of the fathers, before Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century; though the baptism of believers is repeatedly found in various authors; some of which I shall cite in the next chapter. 2. That when infant baptism is *first* mentioned, in the Christian father above quoted, it is in a passage where the rite is referred to, not as of something of universal practice and approbation; but where it is *opposed*

and reasoned against as something unknown in the age of Christ and the apostles, and destitute of their authority, for with him their authority would not have been questioned for a moment; and as something implying *danger* in reference to sponsors, and *absurdity* relative to children. To this effect reasons

RIGALTIVS, the learned annotator upon Cyprian. “In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that *both men and women were baptized* when they believed the gospel preached by Philip, but not a word of infants. From the age of the apostles, therefore, up to the time of Tertullian, the matter remained dubious; and there were some, who, from that saying of our Lord, *Suffer little children to come unto me*, to whom the Lord, nevertheless, did not command water to be administered, took occasion to baptize even new-born infants. And, as if they transacted some secular business with God, they offered sponsors or sureties to Christ, who engaged that they should not revolt from the Christian faith when adult; which, indeed, displeased Tertullian.” In another place he says, “They gave the sign of faith to a person before he was capable of faith itself.” *Annot. in Cypr. Epist. ad Fidum; et Lib. de Lapsis.*

18. Tradition from the apostles, is declared by the Church of Rome to be the authority for infant baptism: is this said to be its authority where the practice is *first* mentioned?

Answer. No such authority is ever once hinted at.

VENEMA. “Tertullian dissuades from baptizing infants—which he certainly would not have done, if it had been a

tradition, and a public custom of the church, seeing he was *very tenacious* of traditions; nor, had it been a tradition, would he have failed to mention it."

19. Do we find any other innovation introduced into the church of Christ, about the same period?

Answer. Several. We never read of—1. The consecration of the baptismal water; 2. The use of sponsors; 3. The imposition of hands at baptism; 4. The use of material unction at confirmation; 5. Offering prayers and oblations for the dead, etc.; we never read of any of these in any Christian writer before Tertullian; and hence, learned Pædobaptists infer that they were introduced about that time. Thus, Mr. Pierce, speaking of the third of these, says, that Tertullian is "the most ancient author that mentions this rite;" and adds, "We make no doubt it began about the time of Tertullian." *Vindication of Dissenters*, Pt. III. ch. vii. We come to the same conclusion, for the very same reason, respecting the baptism of infants. The learned divine I cited on the former question, seems willing to admit this:—

VENEMA. "I conclude, therefore, that Pædobaptism *cannot* be plainly proved to have been practised before the time of Tertullian; and that there were persons in his age who desired their infants might be baptized, especially when they were afraid of their dying without baptism; which opinion

Tertullian opposed, and, *by so doing, intimates that Pædobaptism began to prevail.*" *Pæd. Exam.*

20. Did the Christian fathers, who first advocated the baptism of infants, suppose that some saving benefit was communicated to them by that ordinance?

Answer. They did.—They held that baptism was necessary to salvation; that forgiveness accompanied it; that infants by it were purged from the pollution of original sin; and that all persons dying without baptism were lost. Thus,

CYPRIAN, A. D. 253. "As far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost. It is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God; which rule, as it holds to all, so we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants, to whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted; because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world, they do intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion."

AMBROSE, A. D. 390. "For no person comes to the kingdom of heaven, but by the sacrament of baptism.—Infants that are baptized are reformed back again from wickedness to the primitive state of their nature."

CHRYSOSTOM, A. D. 398. "The grace of baptism gives cure without pain, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit. Some think that the heavenly grace consists only in the *forgiveness of sins*; but I have reckoned up TEN advantages of it." "If sudden death seize us before we are baptized, though we have a thousand good qualities, there is nothing to be expected but hell." See the original of these passages in Dr. Wall's *Hist. of Inf. Baptism.*

These extracts, which I might have increased a hundredfold, are sufficient to prove that some of the fathers, from about the middle of the third century, considered baptism as *essentially necessary to salvation*; and in this false view of the ordinance the baptism of infants originated. To this agree the following learned writers :—

SUICERUS, Professor of Greek and Hebrew at Zurich. “This opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism arose from a wrong understanding of our Lord’s words, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” *Pæd. Exam.*

SALMASIUS, the very learned historian and critic. “An opinion prevailed that no one could be saved without being baptized; and for that reason the custom arose of baptizing infants.” *Ibid.*

21. But if a profession of repentance and faith was always required before baptism in the apostolic age, how could Christian ministers or churches, so early as the days of Tertullian, admit of the baptism of infants, by whom no such profession could be made?

Answer. The deficiency, in reference to infants, was ingeniously supplied by introducing “sponsors.” They would not dispense with the profession, but they would admit it by proxy. Two or three persons, and in the case of an infant of high rank, from twenty to a hundred, were admitted as “sureties,” who professed, *in behalf of*

the infant, to repent, renounce the devil and his works, and to believe the doctrines of the gospel. These sureties are first mentioned by Tertullian, A. D. 204, in the passage I have copied, where they are called "sponsores," that is, persons who answer, or make themselves answerable, for another.

Here is *religion by proxy*; real, personal, experimental religion! a thing unheard of before since the world began: but when so many strange absurdities were introduced into the church, as those we have already mentioned, we need not be much surprised at this. To a reader, however, who knows by his own experience, and by the concurrent testimony of every part of the Bible, that there is no real religion but that which is between God and the soul, and is God's gift, and in which another can have no share or part, it is grievous to reflect seriously on this alarming innovation.

22. But do modern Pædobaptists entertain the same view as the ancients, as to the necessity of baptism to salvation?

Answer. The *majority* of professed Christians have long avowed, and do still avow, the same doctrine! The Church of Rome has honored those who dare deny it, with an "anathema;" and the Greek Church, though not so ready to

anathematize, entertains the same opinion. The Reformed Churches, and the different denominations of Protestant Pædobaptists, whether bearing the name of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Wesleyans, though many of them disavow the doctrine, yet they hold opinions, which, when fairly carried out to their consequences, come little short of the same amount. If baptism makes its subjects, as some of them say, "Children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" or, as all of them, by their leading writers have said, that it brings its subjects "into the church of Christ," or "into the covenant of grace," or "seals to them the benefits of that covenant," and which is "the covenant of redemption, embracing all that Jehovah can impart;" *then baptism saves*. If it brings into, or seals the benefits of, the covenant of grace, it will bring to heaven; for God hath joined these together. And if there be not *another way* of bringing into this "covenant of grace and redemption," what must become of those who are *not* brought in, and who die in that situation? Thus pressed to consequences, I see no other conclusion from these premises, but that of Chrysostom, just cited, horrible as it sounds! Let the Christians, who would recoil at the thought of that conclusion, examine rigidly and honestly whether the

virtues they join to the rite of baptism, afford not the just and fair ground of it. And if the conclusion be denied, let them deny the premises from which it is drawn; but while they avow the premises, I must be allowed to insist upon the conclusion.

23. If no spiritual or saving benefit necessarily attends the ordinance of baptism, which evidently is, and ever has been, conceived as the basis and reason of infant baptism by the *majority* of those that have practised it, why is the ordinance administered at all? and of what use is it in the church of Christ?

Answer. "God is his own interpreter." The ritual ordinances appointed of God in his church were never, under any dispensation, intended by Him to carry salvation with them. For that purpose "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision," as the apostle affirms; and the same may be said of baptism and the Lord's supper. Salvation proceeds from a source entirely distinct and separate from these ordinances.

What, then, you inquire, is the use of baptism? I might reply by asking another question, Of what use is the Bible? or of what use is preaching the gospel? The Bible cannot save—nor can preaching save. They are, however,

God's *appointed means* of instructing mankind, and showing them the way of salvation. Baptism is of the same nature, and its intention is the same. It strikingly shows, by an emblematical representation, what the Bible and the gospel show by the written and preached Word. Baptism proclaims impressively, though no voice is heard, The sinner's pollution,—the penitent's purification,—the believer's death and burial to the sinful practices of this world,—and what the Lord Jesus passed through to work out redemption for his people. It is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit, and of Him *alone*, to make the truths thus taught by baptism, or taught by the written or preached Word, effectual to salvation; and each is alike useless without his divine power, Zech. iv. 6; 1 Cor. ii. 4; iii. 6; 1 Thes. i. 5. And on the other hand, each is said *to save* as the Holy Spirit gives the effectual blessing with them and through them. See 2 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Baptism is also of importance in the church, not only by what it teaches, but as an initiatory ordinance; and being placed at the entrance to the visible church of Christ, it is a *personal profession* of belief in, and reliance upon Christ, and a willingness to submit to Him in all things; and imposes a solemn obligation to a personal

dedication to his service and glory. Hence, though not a saving ordinance, it is, like the Lord's supper, of great importance in its proper and Scriptural place.

24. In a word, Does not the view of Christian baptism for which you contend, lead me to the conclusion that infant baptism is a mere *human invention*, subversive of God's institution, imposed upon the church of Christ through false notions of saving efficacy, and without the least Scripture authority? If so, the confidence placed in it must be vain, delusive, and dangerous, and the practice of it offensive in the sight of God.

Answer. The following passage from an eminent Scotch divine, is justly applicable to this subject, and I give it as my answer. Let the reader bear *infant baptism* in mind, while he peruses these solemn observations :—

REV. THOMAS BOSTON, author of "Human Nature in its Four-fold State," etc. "The saints have no confidence in man's externals. I call those things so, which God never made duty, but men make them so. These are not only *vain confidences*, but vain worship and service, that is *loathsome to God*. Matt. xv. 9. Men are apt to cut the law short enough as it is found in the Word, but men's nature has a wonderful itching after *making additions of their own* to it. Hence a cloud of superstition has darkened some churches, and the simplicity of gospel-worship is despised. Men's inventions are brought in upon, yea, instead of divine institutions! But

though they should be bound with the TIE OF ANTIQUITY, as Matt. v. 21;—with the TIE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY, as Matt. xxiii. 4; or with the TIE OF CIVIL AUTHORITY, as Hosea v. 11; seeing it cannot be set home on the conscience with, *Thus saith the Lord*, it is to be *rejected*, and by no means complied with, be the hazard what it will. Deut. iv. 2. ‘Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it.’” *Sermons and Discourses*. Edinburgh, 1756.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE SCRIPTURAL MODE OF BAPTISM.

I HAVE promised my reader to refer again to the MODE of baptism, and expressed my hope to satisfy any candid inquirer on the subject; and this I hope to do, not by the *quantity* of what I write on the subject, but by stating arguments, which I consider irresistibly convincing and decisive. In this chapter, as in the former, I shall suppose my reader disposed to put inquiries involving all the leading points of the controversy.

1 *Question.* Are the most learned and competent writers agreed, that the *sense* you have given, of the words chosen of God to express this ordinance, *baptize* and *baptism*, is their *ordinary* and *most proper* sense?

Answer. More competent authority the learned world does not afford than the following:—

WITSIUS. “It cannot be denied that the native signification of the word βαπτειν, and βαπτισεν, is *to plunge, to dip.*” *Econ. of the Cov.* L. IV. c. xvi. § 13.

CALVIN. “The word *baptize*, signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church.” *Pæd. Exam.*

ALSTEDIUS. "To baptize, signifies only to immerse; not to wash, except by consequence." *Ibid.*

BEZA. "Christ commanded us to be baptized; by which word it is certain immersion is signified." *Ibid.*

VITRINGA. "The act of baptizing is the immersion of believers in water. This expresses the force of the word." *Ibid.*

H. ALTINGIUS. "The word baptism properly signifies immersion; improperly, by a metonymy of the end, washing." *Ibid.*

SCAPULA. "To baptize,—to dip or immerse, as we immerse any thing for the purpose of dyeing or cleansing it in water." *Ibid.*

DR. CAMPBELL, of Aberdeen. "The primitive signification of baptizma is immersion; of baptizein, to immerse, plunge, or overwhelm." *IV. Gospels, Note on Matt. xx. 22.*

BOSSUET, Bishop of Meaux. "To baptize signifies to plunge, as is granted by all the world." *In Pæd. Exam.*

DR. CHALMERS. "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion; and though we regard it as a point of indifference, whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way, or by sprinkling; yet WE DOUBT NOT that the prevalent style of administration in the apostle's days was by an actual submerging the whole body under water." *Lectures*, as already quoted.

DR. CHALMERS frankly admits, with multitudes of others, that the word baptism, in the law of Christ, signifies immersion; and being doubtless well read in the Christian authors of the first centuries, as well as fully aware of what the Holy Scriptures contain upon this subject, he as frankly admits what was "the prevalent style of administration in the apostles' days." But the force and power of this *high authority* of Christ and his apostles the Dr. neutralizes completely with regard to his own practice, by strangely adding, "But we regard it as a point of indifference whether the ordinance be

performed in this way, or by sprinkling." What! a point of indifferency whether Christians abide by what Christ ordained and the apostles practised! Carry this principle out, and to what would it lead? Would the Jews deem it a point of indifferency whether they used leavened or unleavened bread in the passover? Or it is a point of indifferency to Christians, whether they use bread in the Lord's supper, or some other article instead of it? And if neither Jews nor Christians dare to alter the divine law in these ordinances, what mode of reasoning can lead an humble disciple of Jesus to make such a complete change in the equally solemn and sacred ordinance of baptism! The apostle Paul evidently would not have admitted this indifferency: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." 1 Cor. xi. 2. Allow a change in any thing the Lord ordains, and what a door do you open! All the corruptions ever known under the Christian name can then be admitted, and none can with propriety oppose them, but by denouncing the opening of such a door.

The late DR. MOSES STUART, of Andover, in his work on Baptism, after giving extracts from Hermas, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Dionysius, Gregory, Nyssen, and others, showing baptism to be immersion, adds, "'It is,' says Augusti, 'a thing made out.' So, indeed, all the writers who have thoroughly investigated this subject, conclude. I know of no one usage of ancient times, which seems to be more clearly and certainly made out. I cannot see how it is possible for any candid man, who examines this subject, to deny this."

2. As in one branch of the Christian church, the *Greek language* has been continued from the age of the apostles, and with them the words βαπτίζω and βαπτισμα, baptize and baptism, remain

unaltered, and in common use to this day,—let me ask, How do *they* understand the words? and how *administer* the ordinance?

REV. R. ROBINSON. “The native Greeks must understand their own language better than foreigners, and they have ALWAYS understood the word *baptism* to signify *dipping*; and, therefore, from their first embracing of Christianity to this day, they have always baptized, and do yet baptize, by *immersion*. This is an authority for the meaning of the word infinitely preferable to that of European lexicographers. In this case the Greeks are unexceptionable guides.” *History of Baptism*.

3. But what is denominated the “Greek Church” is now extended over an immense portion of the globe: is the same mode of baptism observed in all the nations included in it?

GOOD AND GREGORY’S PANTALOGIA, under the article “Greek Church,” thus explains, “That part of the Christian church which was first established in Greece, is now spread over a larger extent of country than any other established church. It comprehends in its bosom a considerable part of Greece, the Grecian isles, Wallachia, Moldavia, Egypt, Abyssinia, Nubia, Lybia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia, and Palestine.—It may be observed, that amid all their trifling rites, they practise trine-immersion, which is unquestionably the primitive manner.”

DR. WALL. “The Greek church, in all the branches of it, does still use immersion.” *Hist. of Infant Baptism*.

SIR P. RICAULT. “Thrice dipping or plunging, this church holds to be as necessary to the form of baptism, as water to the matter.” *Pæd. Exam.*

4. Is there any evidence in the writings of the *first Christian fathers* after the apostles, respecting the mode of baptism as administered by them, and in their times?

Answer. The first Christians after the days of the apostles, could never bring themselves to make so great a change in an institution of Christ, as to substitute sprinkling for immersion. At the end of the two first centuries, a substitute was invented for a profession of *faith* in behalf of infants, as we have seen; but it required a thousand years to pass before immersion was superseded by any other mode; except in the case of sick or dying persons. If, then, we can ascertain the general mode of baptism in the first centuries following the apostles, without doubt it will be what the Lord ordained. And happily there is abundance of evidence upon this subject. I shall cite a few short passages, and the references may lead the reader, if disposed, to a deeper investigation:—

BARNABAS, Paul's companion. An epistle ascribed to him has escaped the ravages of time. Two passages refer to baptism; in one he says, "Blessed are they who, fixing their hope on the cross, have gone down into the water." The other, "We descend into the water, . . . and come up out of it, . . . having in our hearts reverential fear, and hope through Jesus." *Epist.* cap. xi.

HERMAS, honored by Paul's salutation, Rom. xvi. 14. A Latin version of his work, entitled 'The Pastor,' or Shepherd, is extant. In it he speaks of the apostles *accompanying* the

persons to be baptized into the water. "The apostles and teachers preached to them that before were dead, and gave them this seal; for they went down with them into the water, and came up again." See this and other allusions in *Lib. I. vis.* 8, sect. 7; and *Lib. III. similit.* 9.

JUSTIN MARTYR, about A. D., 150, wrote "An Apology for Christians, addressed to the emperor, the senate, and people of Rome." In this work he describes the doctrines and ordinances of the church of Christ; and on baptism has the following passage:—"I will now declare to you also, after what manner we, being made new by Christ, have dedicated ourselves to God, lest, if I should leave that out, I might seem to deal unfairly in some part of my apology. They who are persuaded and do believe that those things which are taught by us are true, and do promise to live according to them, are directed first to pray and ask of God with fasting, the forgiveness of their former sins; and we also pray and fast with them. Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are baptized by the same way of baptism by which we were baptized: for they are washed (*εν τῷ ὕδατι*,) *in the water* in the name of God the Father, Lord of all things; and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit." *Justin Mart. Apolog.*, II. sect. 79.

Upon this passage of Justin, DR. WALL remarks, "This is the most ancient account of the way of baptizing, next to the Scripture; and shows the plain and simple manner of administering it." And MR. REEVES, the learned translator of Justin, adds, in a Note, "'Tis evident from this place of Justin and that of Tertullian (*de Cor. Mil. c. 3.*) that *ponds* and *rivers* were the only baptisteries or fonts the church had for the first two hundred years.—The catechumen, being brought to the baptistery, was thus interrogated, Dost thou renounce the devil?—Dost thou renounce the world? etc., etc. Ans. I do renounce them.—Next he made an open confession of the faith, the bishop asking him, Dost thou believe in God:

etc., to which the person answered, I do believe. And this form of interrogation the apostle is thought to refer to when he styles baptism the answer of a good conscience towards God."—After this confession is made, the candidate, Mr. Reeves adds, was "thrice plunged under water at the naming of the Three Persons in the blessed Trinity." *Apologies*.

TERTULLIAN, (A. D. 204.) "For the law of baptizing is laid down, and the form prescribed: Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name, etc. He bound faith and the necessity of baptism together; therefore from that time all who believed were dipped." "The person to be baptized, in great simplicity . . . is let down in the water and with a few words said, is dipped." Again, when speaking of the vain anxiety to be baptized in the Jordan,—“There is no difference whether one is washed in a sea or in a pool, in a river or in a fountain, in a lake or in a channel; nor is there any difference between them whom John dipped in Jordan, and those whom Peter dipped in the Tiber:” *De Baptismo*, cap. 2, 4, 7, 13. See more in *De Corona Mil.* cap. I.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN, A. D. 360. "We are buried with Christ by baptism that we may also rise again with Him; we descend with Him that we may also be lifted up with Him; we ascend with Him as we may also be glorified with Him." *Orat.* 40. *Stennett's Answer to Russen*.

BASIL, A. D. 360. "Εν τρισι ταῖς καθύπερθε," &c. "In three immersions the great mystery of baptism is accomplished." *Stennett*.

AMBROSE, A. D. 374. "Thou wast asked, Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty? Thou saidst, 'I do believe,' and wast immersed, that is, thou wast buried. Thou wast asked again, Dost thou believe on our Lord Jesus Christ and his crucifixion? Thou saidst, 'I believe,' and wast immersed again, and so wast buried with Christ."

CYRIL, of Jerusalem, A. D. 374. "After these things ye were led to the holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ was

carried from the cross to the sepulchre. And each of you was asked, Whether he believed, etc.; and ye made that saving confession, and descended three times into the water and ascended again;—and that water of salvation was a grave to you.” In another place, when showing how “the whole soul is baptized by the Spirit,” from the account given of the spiritual baptism of the first disciples, in Acts ii. 1–4, he thus refers to the mode of water baptism, as an illustration:—

“For, as he who plunges into the waters and is baptized, is encompassed on all sides by the waters, so were they also baptized completely by the Holy Ghost.—*It filled the house where they were sitting*; for the house became the vessel of the spiritual water; as the disciples sat within, the whole house was filled. Thus they were entirely baptized,—invested soul and body with a divine and saving garment.” Again, in another place,

“Even Simon Magus once came to the laver of baptism; he was baptized, but not enlightened. His body he dipped in water, but admitted not the Spirit to illuminate his heart. His body went down into the pool, and came up; but his soul was not buried together with Christ, nor with Him raised.”* *Catach.* xx. § iv.—xvii. § xiv. *Intro.* § 2.

CHRYSOSTOM, A. D. 398. “To be baptized (*και καταδυεσθαι*) and plunged, and then to emerge or rise again, is a symbol of our descent into the grave, and our ascent out of it; and, therefore, Paul calls baptism *a burial*.” *Homil.* XI. in 1 Cor.

5. Do learned Pædobaptists grant that this

* Cyril's works, in the original, are in Greek. The copy I had access to (Paris, 1720) is accompanied by a Latin version, from which the sentences above are transcribed. The English translation I have preferred copying from the “Library of the Fathers: translated by members of the English Church.” *Oxford*, 1838.

practice of immersion was the general, and esteemed the only legitimate, mode of baptism, among the early Christians; and that in this they were obediently following the authority of Christ and the apostles?

WITSIUS affirms,—“It is certain that both John the Baptist, and the disciples of Christ, ordinarily practised immersion; whose example was followed by the ancient church, as Vossius has shown, by producing many testimonies from the Greek and Latin writers.” *Econ. of the Cov. Lib. IV. cap. xvi. § 13.*

MR. BOWER. “Baptism by immersion was undoubtedly the apostolical practice, and was never dispensed with by the church, except in case of sickness,” etc. *Hist. of the Popes.*

G. J. VOSSIUS. “That the apostles immersed whom they baptized there is no doubt . . . And that the ancient church followed their example is very clearly evinced, by innumerable testimonies of the Fathers.” *Disputat. de Bap., Disp. 1. § 6.*

MR. REEVES. “The ancients carefully observed trine-immersion, insomuch, that by the “Canons Apostolical,” either Bishop or Presbyter who baptized without it was DEPOSED FROM THE MINISTRY.” See the *Canons*, 42 to 50. Reeves’ *Apologies of Justin.*

ENCYCLOPÆDIA ECCLESIASTICA, a learned and splendid work. “Whatever weight may be in these reasons as a defence for the present practice of sprinkling, IT IS EVIDENT that during the first ages of the church, and for MANY CENTURIES afterwards, the practice of immersion prevailed; and which seems indeed NEVER to be departed from, except where it was administered to a person at the point of death, or upon the bed of sickness,—which was considered indeed as not giving the party the full privileges of baptism.” Article, *Baptism.*

6. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost is expressed by the term *pouring*; "I will pour out my Spirit," etc., Joel. ii. 21; realized on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 17. Now, if by the pouring of the Spirit upon the disciples they are said to be "baptized" with the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 5, does not this favor the *pouring* of water rather than *immersing* in it?

Answer. If my reader will turn back to the passage produced from Cyril of Jerusalem, he will find the baptism of the Holy Ghost clearly described. The Holy Spirit was truly said to be *poured out* and to *fall*, Acts xi. 15, upon the disciples, and then it is added that the divine presence "filled all the house where they were sitting;" and they were therefore "baptized" and "filled with the Holy Ghost." Now, as the word baptize never means to pour, but always, when used in its proper, literal, and obvious sense, to immerse, with the sense of covering, it is evident that the circumstance of filling the house, and filling the disciples by the divine presence, constituted the baptism, and not the act of pouring; and as the Greek father above named, writing so early after the apostles, and in the same language with them, viewed this circumstance as constituting the spiritual baptism, I have no doubt of the accuracy of this interpretation. The baptism of

the Holy Ghost, therefore, is favorable to immersion, not against it.

Whether that in which a person is said to be immersed *rises* so as to *cover* him,—or is *poured upon him* to the same extent,—or he is *put into it*, the sense of *immersion* is the same in each case. So it is with the term *baptism*. The sense of *covering* is never absent from the use of the word; as Dr. Carson has demonstrated in his elaborate work entitled, “Baptism in its Mode and Subjects considered;” published by the American Baptist Publication Society. To this able work the reader is referred who wishes a thorough investigation of this subject.

The word *sprinkling* is also used with reference to the gift of the Holy Ghost, as it is also with reference to the blood of Christ. Ezek. xxxvi. 25; 1 Peter, i. 2. The allusion is to the ceremonial sprinkling of blood under the law, and intimates the cleansing efficacy of the blood and Spirit of Christ; but the word is never used with reference to the mode of baptism. If such allusions to the Spirit’s gifts and “diversities of operations” were to authorize *modes of baptism*, how many modes might be practised? But who would set such allusions against *the admitted fact*, that Christ and the apostles observed and authorized no mode but immersion?

7. Admitting the evidence of the original practice of immersion to be decisive, must it not be a display of ignorance and weakness to oppose or contradict it; and, indeed, to ridicule that mode, as some do, a profane contempt of the wisdom and authority of Christ?

DR. WALL, who explored all the voluminous writers of antiquity in search of evidence of infant baptism, says, "This [immersion] is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that as one cannot but pity the weak endeavors of such Pædobaptists as would maintain the negative of it, so we ought to disown and show a dislike of the profane scoffs which some people give to the English Anti-pædobaptists merely for the use of dipping;—when it was, in all probability, the way by which our blessed Saviour, and for certain, was the most usual and ordinary way by which the ancient Christians did receive their baptism. 'Tis a great want of prudence as well as of honesty to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true, and may be proved so. It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says."—"The custom of the Christians in the near succeeding times [to the apostles] being more largely and particularly delivered in books, is *known* to have been generally or ordinarily a total immersion." *Hist. of Inf. Baptism*, Pt. II. ch. ix § 2. And its *Defence*.

DR. CAMPBELL, Professor at Aberdeen. "I have heard a disputant, in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament *baptize*, means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge; and in defiance of all antiquity, that the former was the earliest and the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner never fails with persons of knowledge to *betray the cause he would defend*; and though, with respect to the vulgar, bold

assertions generally succeed as well as argument, and sometimes better; yet a CANDID MIND will always DISDAIN *to take the help of FALSEHOOD*, even in the support of truth." *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence*.

EDINBURGH PRESBYTERIAN REVIEWERS. "We cannot but regret, therefore, that Mr. Ewing should have been guilty of so many gross and glaring blunders in his endeavor to make out a case in favor of sprinkling. . . . We have rarely met, for example, with a more weak and fanciful piece of reasoning, than that by which Mr. Ewing would persuade us that there is no allusion to the mode by immersion, in the expression 'buried with him in baptism.' This point ought to be frankly admitted, and indeed cannot be denied with any show of reason." *Review*, Vol. I.

8. How long was immersion continued as the general practice among all Christians?

BISHOP BOSSUET. "We are able to make it appear, by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for THIRTEEN HUNDRED YEARS, baptism was thus [by immersion] administered throughout the whole church, as far as possible." *Stennet's Answer to Russen*.

STACKHOUSE. "Several authors have shown, and proved, that this immersion continued, as much as possible, to be used for THIRTEEN HUNDRED YEARS after Christ." *Hist. of the Bible*. See also DR. WHITBY, already cited.

9. At what period, and on what accounts, was the custom of pouring, or sprinkling, first introduced?

Answer. There is no earlier record, that Dr. Wall could discover, than in the case of Novatian, about the middle of the third century. This man,

while unbaptized, as Eusebius records, Eccles. Hist. L. VI. c. 43, "fell into a dangerous disease, and because he was very like to die was baptized in the bed where he lay," (εν κλινῇ περιχυθεντα, that is, *sprinkled all over in bed*,) "if," adds Eusebius, "that might be termed baptism." Novatian recovered; and by the following circumstance we have remarkably preserved the view which the Christian church generally took of his baptism. The See of Rome became vacant, A. D. 251. Two persons were chosen to succeed, namely, Cornelius, "chosen by the major part," and this Novatian, "in a schismatical way." Cornelius writes a long letter to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, in which he describes the case of Novatian, and says, as Dr. Wall translates it, "that Novatian came not canonically to his order of priesthood, much less was he capable of being chosen bishop." Let the reader mark the reason assigned, "For that *all the clergy*, and a *great many* of the laity, were against his being chosen presbyter; because it was not lawful, they said, for any one that had been baptized in his bed, (Greek *sprinkled over*) as he had been, to be admitted to any office of the clergy." *Wall's Hist.*, Part II. ch. ix. § 2.

Here is the first recorded case of *affusion*, whether pouring or sprinkling, for baptism; and here we have a serious objection taken against

the person so baptized on account of it; an objection in which "all the clergy" were united. What was the objection? Was it against *his situation*, as being sick in bed? or against the *mode* of the ordinance? This is important to be ascertained. I answer, It was against *both*; for soon after this time, these two objections against such a baptism were exhibited. 1. There was an objection against a *person sick*; because, as the Council of Neocæsarea affirmed by the 12th canon, "He that is baptized when he is sick, ought not to be made a priest; for his coming to the faith is *not voluntary*, but from necessity." And, 2. As to the *mode*, while Novatian was living, one Magnus submits this question to Cyprian:—"Whether they are to be *esteemed right Christians*, who are not washed in the water, but only sprinkled?" Cyprian answers, that the baptism was to be esteemed good, "*necessity compelling to it, and God granting his indulgence.*" I leave the reader to reflect on the force of this evidence.

From this period, A. D. 250, onward, sprinkling was permitted, but *only in a case of necessity*, and in prospect of death; originating in a false view of the necessity of the ordinance to salvation. "France," says Dr. Wall, "seems to have been the first country in the world, where

baptism by affusion was used ordinarily to persons in health." This affusion, or pouring, in the Church of Rome, was first *tolerated* in the eighth century, while immersion was still the established law of the church ; and so things stood for several hundred years. In the sixteenth century, pouring was generally adopted. The rituals of that church prove this to a demonstration. See Robinson's *History of Baptism*, and Bishop Bossuet, just cited.

The Church of England held the original practice of dipping longer than many continental nations. Erasmus says, A. D. 1530, "With us [the Dutch] they have the water poured on them ; in England they are dipped." The Rubric to this day instructs the clergyman, "he shall *dip* in the water discreetly and warily ;" but it allows an exception, "but if they shall certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to *pour* water upon it." The Catechism requires the youth to express the form of baptism only as by immersion, "Water *wherein* the person is baptized." In the early history of this church, "the offices or liturgies," says Dr. Wall, "did ALL ALONG . . . enjoin dipping, without any mention of pouring or sprinkling." In A. D. 1549, first appeared the exception for "weak" children : four years afterwards, the word *thrice*, after the order *to dip*,

was omitted. Sprinkling began to prevail about A. D. 1550, and “within the time of half a century, from A. D. 1550, to 1600, *prevailed to be the more general*, as it is now almost the only way of baptizing.” Dr. Wall’s *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Pt. II. ch. ix. § 2.

10. In what proportion of the Christian world has immersion been continued down to the present time?

Answer. DR. WALL. “What has been said of this custom of pouring or sprinkling water in the ordinary use of baptism, is to be understood only in reference to *these western parts of Europe*: for it is used ordinarily nowhere else. The Greek Church does still use immersion; and so do all other Christians in the world, except the Latins. All those nations of Christians that do now, or formerly did submit to the authority of the bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling; but all other Christians in the world, who never owned the Pope’s usurped power, *do and ever did dip* their infants in the ordinary use . . . All the Christians in Asia, all in Africa, and about one-third part of Europe, are of the last sort.” *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part II. ch. ix.

Does my reader wish me to proceed any further? To my mind the subject is perfectly settled; because the evidence adduced before us has been, not so much in criticism upon words, as in plain HISTORICAL FACTS; facts admitted beyond dispute; and, as they include the prac-

tice of the apostolic age, they are DECISIVE upon the subject.

The contention, therefore, that the word *baptize* has other senses besides *to immerse*, and that the prepositions rendered *into* and *out of*, in the baptism of the eunuch, may be rendered *to* and *from* the water; all this is perfect quibbling and trifling, when the *fact* is conceded, that Jesus, and his apostles, and the primitive Christians, observed and authorized the ordinance in this form. Thus the late editor of Calmet, after warmly contending against the views of the Baptists, adds, "Here again, I say, let me not be understood, I believe that immersion was practised by John." Why, granting this, he grants *all*; for if this was the form in which "the LORD of glory" was baptized, and that He authorized, we want no more.

To a person disposed to question the evidence for immersion, I would beg to propose the following *inquiries*, founded upon the historical facts briefly given in the foregoing pages, and which he may more fully examine in the works I have referred to :

1. How came it to pass, that the early Christian writers expressed the rite of baptism by such Greek and Latin words and phrases, exclusive of baptizo, as signify, to be *plunged*; to be *buried*; to be *dipped*; to be *immersed*; to be *let down in*

the water; and to be encompassed by the water on every side?

2. How came it to pass, that when affusion or sprinkling was had recourse to, as an expedient in prospect of death, and the person recovered, he was not deemed so *properly baptized* as to be admissible to any sacred office?

3. How came it to pass, that the fathers should name, as suitable places for baptizing, "the sea, a pool, a river, a fountain, a lake, a channel, the Jordan, the Tiber;" and that the baptism may be alike "in" any one of them?

4. How came it to pass, that by the authority of the "Canons Apostolical," if a bishop or presbyter baptized by any other way than immersion, yea, trine-immersion, he should be deposed?

5. How comes it to pass, that those Christians with whom the command of the Lord Jesus to *baptize* is in their *native tongue*, have, in all ages of their history, observed this mode?

6. How comes it to pass, that the *ancient rituals* of those churches in which pouring and sprinkling now prevail, solemnly *enjoined*, or do still enjoin, the mode of immersion?

7. How came it to pass, that the whole Christian world, however afterwards divided, uniformly observed immersion, except in sickness, for *thirteen hundred years after Christ*?

Now, though the evidence I have produced upon these points from ancient and modern writers be brief, it is beyond doubt, that *what the above inquiries state*, are incontrovertible historical facts, and if the New Testament contained no decisive evidence on the subject, the above *facts* afford a most indisputable proof that immersion was the *original*, and, if so, the *divinely authorized* mode; and consequently that which should be *invariably* and *unalterably* observed to the end of time; for who dares to alter what Christ ordains? “The Lord is at hand!” And He has most solemnly warned every man,—“Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment!” See Eccles. xi. 9; xii. 13, 14; Rev. xxii. 18–21.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPIRITUAL DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

THAT this sacred ordinance was intended by the Great Head of the church to be *symbolical*, and to teach by an expressive and visible sign what the gospel taught by the word preached, is a truth too evident in the New Testament to be doubted; and that the particular form or mode of it was to be *indicative of some important truths*, and that its observance was to have a beneficial influence on the Christian church, are equally clear. This we have partly anticipated, and shall only briefly add:—

1. Baptism was to teach the *sinfulness of man*, and the necessity of *forgiveness* and spiritual *purification*, in order to eternal life. These truths are implied in Peter's words, when exhorting to the ordinance, "Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins;" and in the case of Ananias, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16.

2. Baptism was intended to show forth the

Christian's entire *abandonment of a life of impiety*, and his *entrance upon a new life of devotion and dedication to God*. The metaphor of a *burial* expresses the former, and that of a *resurrection* the latter; both emblematically exhibited in this institution.

3. Baptism was intended to present a figure of our LORD's *overwhelming sufferings*.—To this most interesting circumstance our blessed Redeemer himself alludes in affecting terms. Matt. xx. 22, 23; Luke xii. 50.

4. No less does baptism pre-represent what the Christian anticipates as *the destiny of his own human nature*, when he shall descend like his Redeemer into the grave, and at his Saviour's second coming be raised to glory. In no way but immersion does the ordinance answer these several designs.

5. And, finally, this sacred rite, in reference to its *subjects*, appears evidently designed to form a *line of separation between the world and the church*. A baptized person, in the primitive age, was considered as having come out from the ungodly, and assumed the character and profession of a follower of Christ. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. Just as when a person, entering the service of an earthly prince, *puts on*

the attire by which the servants of that prince are distinguished ; so the Christian, by baptism, puts on, as a garment, an open profession of his Lord and Master ; declaring that he is no longer his own, or the servant of sin and Satan, but bought with a price, and now surrenders himself to Him that loved him and died for him. This entire separation of the church from the world our Saviour most plainly taught in John xv. 19 ; xvii. 6, 9, 20, 21 ; and xviii. 36. As did also the apostles ; see, as an example, 2 Cor. vi. 14 to 18. In none but *believers* can these doctrinal and practical uses of baptism be realized.

In closing, I request my reader's attention to a few thoughts, suggested by the general *objections* of opponents to the practice for which I have contended ; and add my reasons in a summary form, for abiding strictly by that practice.

I.—*Objections to Exclusive Believers' Baptism.*

1. In the form of objection to the principles of the Baptists, relative to this ordinance, it has been remarked that “the *majority* of Christians, with whom are associated an immense number of great, good, and learned men, have held, and do hold, the opposite views ;” and, it is asked, “Can they all be wrong ?”

Answer. I admit that a large proportion of the professed Christian inhabitants of the world, with whom are joined many eminent writers, are against us. But is a majority never wrong,—never found on the side of error? Let my reader ask, “Whether the majority of professed Christians do not think differently from him upon some equally important points?” and how little does he think of the consequence of numbers upon those points! The Chinese plead their majority against Christians; the Catholics against Protestants; etc., etc.; but who feels the force of an argument in the plea?—And “as to great men and great names,” says Dr. A. Clarke, “we find them enrolled and arranged on the side of ALL controversies;” and I will allow my opponent to reckon them up by hundreds, or thousands, and place them all on the side of infant baptism;—I will take, and place on the other side, *Christ and his apostles*, and then I appeal to my reader, Who has the best support?—though my number be but “a little flock” in the comparison.

Now I must be allowed to insist upon it that I have Christ and the apostles with me, giving their sanction to believers’ baptism; and all must admit, that their sanction is *not* to be found on the opposite side. Much, then, as I venerate the good and learned men referred to; as not *they*, but

Christ is my Lord and Master, and is to be my sole Judge at the last day, I hesitate not to quit denominational connection with any majority, or with any particular eminent men, supposing I am found in a minority, IF CHRIST IS WITH ME THERE.

2. It has also been objected, "That our principles are of *recent origin*, and were unknown previous to the appearance of certain enthusiasts in Germany, at the time of the Reformation."

Answer. Our principles are as old as Christianity. We acknowledge no founder but Christ. With enthusiasts in Germany, or in any country or age, we have no connection, and our forefathers never had. Enthusiasts may be designated by the same name; but that proves nothing.—Myriads of persons holding our distinctive principle, that is, *the baptism of believers only*, have appeared in all ages of the Christian era. From Christ to nearly the end of the second century, there were *no others*; at least, if there were any, their history is a blank. After that time, myriads of persons holding that principle have appeared in almost every age.

Without enlarging upon a subject that might fill volumes, I refer my reader to a recent publication, entitled "A concise History of Foreign Baptists," by G. H. ORCHARD; though but a *duodecimo* volume, in it will be found indubitable

evidence of the existence of large bodies of Christians in different countries, from the earliest times down to the Reformation, who uniformly opposed infant baptism as unscriptural, and leading to fatal delusion. Such was the sentiment of the ancient Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Henricians, the Petrobrusians, the Paterines, the Berengarians, etc., etc. Innumerable multitudes of persons, distinguished by these and other names, bore a faithful testimony for Christ for ages;—many died martyrs to the faith, whose life and death bore a lovely transcript of the doctrines of pure unadulterated Christianity, and who, if living at the present age, would come under the denomination of Baptists. They described infant baptism, or the making of infants *Christians* by baptism, as *one of the grossest doctrines of Antichrist*.—The leading or distinctive principles of no denomination of Christians can be traced back to the apostolic age with more clearness and indubitable certainty than those of the Baptists.

In reference to Great Britain, in particular, during the first centuries, it may be affirmed, that from the first introduction of Christianity into it until Pope Gregory, A. D. 596, sent over Austin with a number of monks to convert the people to the Catholic faith, we have good reason for believing that believers' baptism alone prevailed in

that country; for Austin, finding differences to exist between his views and the British Christians, called their ministers together, and proposed "three things," in order to their having his favor and protection. The second of these things was, "THAT YE GIVE CHRISTENDOME TO CHILDREN," that is, that they should baptize them: good proof that they did not do so before. And it is known that Pope Gregory, above referred to, decreed as follows:—"Let all young children be baptized, as they ought to be according to the traditions of the fathers." What an evidence is this of the omission of infant baptism, and the kind of authority by which it was authorized and urged! See Ivimey's *History of the English Baptists*.

The reader should also be informed, that infant communion began about the same time as infant baptism, and attended it till about A. D. 1000. It was administered for the same reason, that is, on account of its saving efficacy. In the east it is still continued.

3. It has been said, in the form of objection, "That we make too much of the ordinance,—that we give it too great a prominence, and attach too much importance to it."

Who, I would ask in reply, *make the most* of this ordinance,—*they* who administer it to make

the baptized members of Christ, or members of his church; and who hasten the administration of the rite as a security to the soul?—*or they* who never think of bringing their dearest relatives to it till they make a profession of faith in Christ, and give evidence of being already converted and saved? The objection might be returned with tenfold force.

4. The body of Christians, called Quakers, as they do not observe the ordinance in any form, ought to be impartial judges in this controversy; and they are opposed to your practice.

Answer. While the Friends oppose all ritual ordinances, they grant, all we want, that we have the example of the apostles with us; and deny that authority for infant baptism. Thus,

WILLIAM PENN. “There is not one text of Scripture to prove that sprinkling in the face was water baptism, or that children were the subjects of water baptism in the first times.” *Defence of Gospel Truth*, against the Bishop of Cork.

E. BATHURST. “Infant Baptism . . . they [the Friends] utterly deny, as a thing by men imposed, and never by God or Christ instituted.—Yet we grant the baptism of those that had faith to entitle them to it. This was the baptism of John.” *Test. and Writings*.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD. “What great hypocrisy and insincerity are those persons justly chargeable with, in the sight of God, angels, and men, in their not practising that baptism they have pleaded for from the practice of the apostles; but, instead thereof, rantism, or sprinkling of infants, to make

them thereby *members of Christ*, and of his church militant!"
Truth Prevalent.

5. On the mode it is objected, "That it is more troublesome and inconvenient than the usual mode of sprinkling; and quite *a cross* to submit to it."

Answer. I admit this, as certainly the feeling of human nature; but I beg to inquire, Is the trouble and inconvenience too great, and the cross too heavy to be borne, if it be proved that Christ sanctioned that mode by his command and his example? Who, as a Christian, if present on the banks of Jordan when Christ was baptized, would refuse or object to be the next person to be baptized after Christ, and in the same way? And, if *then*, when the Holy Spirit was visibly descending, and the Father's voice was heard, you would cheerfully have entered the streams of Jordan, is not the ordinance the same *now*, equally binding, endearing, and as much under the eye and the blessing of heaven? Without doubt: and surely your Redeemer has done enough and suffered enough for sinners, to entitle Him to this act of obedience from them, supposing it does give them a small degree of trouble, and inconvenience, and a cross to bear after him. Hear his own words,—“He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.” See Matt. x. 38; Luke ix. 26, and xii. 8, 9.

6. It is further objected, "That the testimonies of learned Pædobaptists in favor of *immersion* go for nothing, if they themselves observed a *different mode* in their own practice ;—that their own practice must appear to their minds as having more convincing scripture authority."

Answer. That by no means follows,—and is not the fact. The most eminent writers who have practiced *sprinkling* have readily and candidly admitted that they had not scripture authority for that mode, either by command or precedent ; but they had other reasons for it. The most common is that given by Dr. Chalmers in the extract we have copied. To the "indifferency" of Dr. C., Mr. Baxter and others have added "expediency:" that "the climate in cold countries renders an alteration desirable." But few authors, who have thoroughly examined the subject, pretend to question the scripture authority of immersion ; or assert that sprinkling has such evidence.

7. But it is added, "The *quantity* of water can matter nothing ; any more than the quantity of wine or bread in the Lord's supper."

Answer. This is granted, providing only there be a *sufficient* quantity to fulfill Christ's command. It is not the quantity that is contended for, but a *conformity* to the pattern of Christ ; and any de-

parture from that pattern renders the act no longer an act of obedience to Him.

8. But, another objects, "I have, I hope, received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is the thing signified; and I do not see the necessity of submitting to this rite, as it cannot take away sin, or do me any good."

Answer. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is made, by the Apostle Peter, the very reason why those that received it should receive this ordinance, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which HAVE RECEIVED the Holy Ghost as well as we?" And as to the good the ordinance can do, and its inability to take away sin, I again refer to Him who had no sin to take away, and needed no good from religious services, yet traveled a long journey "to be baptized," and silenced every objection against it by affirming "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

II.—*Reasons for the Baptism of Believers only.*

1. Because I am quite SURE that I have plain SCRIPTURE AUTHORITY for believers' baptism; but to authorize the baptism of infants not a word in the New Testament is to be found.

2. Because the baptism of believers is in harmony with the doctrines of the gospel, and the

nature of Christ's kingdom, which "is not of this world," but spiritual, the religion of the heart, the mind, and the soul, and extends no further amongst men than FAITH and Christian experience extend. John i. 11-13.

3. Because baptism, being an act of *obedience* to Christ, must have Christ's *command*, or authority; the baptism of believers only has this; "Can that be obedience," inquires Mr. Baxter, "which hath no command? Who knows what will please God but Himself; and has He not told us, what He expects from us?"

4. Because the supposed *spiritual connection* between believers and their infants, constituting some distinction of a spiritual nature, entitling such infants to baptism, and not possessed by other infants, is unsupported by the word of God and contrary to reason and fact. There is no spiritual difference in the human family without experimental religion, or vital Christianity; and that is not of carnal propagation, but the work of the Holy Spirit, and possessed only by believers in Jesus. John i. 13; vi. 63; 1 Peter i. 23.

5. Because the doctrine of infant baptism, namely, "that children by it are brought into the covenant of grace, which is the covenant of redemption," or the benefits of that covenant sealed to them, is opposed to all the leading doctrines

of the gospel, whether according to the views of Arminians or Calvinists. What, in this case, becomes of the doctrine of God's election? of the necessity of repentance? of the new birth? of conversion? of faith in Christ? and of justification through faith? etc. All these are superseded by baptism, if the above doctrine be true.

6. Because of the dangerous practical tendency of infant baptism. If children, advancing into life, believe the above doctrine, they are likely to *rest satisfied* in the "benefits sealed," and without any further concern, without faith or piety, live in the hypocrite's hope, and perish with a "lie in their right hand!"

7. Because, admitting the doctrine that baptism now, and formerly circumcision, brought infants into the covenant of grace and redemption, the *horrible conclusion* will follow, that children dying before baptism can be administered to them, and before the eighth day appointed for circumcision, *must die out of the covenant of redemption* and therefore inevitably *perish forever!* This being impossible, because being contrary to God's just government, and to his word, the doctrine cannot be true from which such a conclusion is justly to be drawn.

8. Because infant baptism goes to unite the world with the church of Christ. Have not the

vilest infidels in Christendom received the seal of the covenant, if infant baptism can give it, and thus been “grafted into the body of Christ’s church?” How grossly absurd! How lamentable, that they should have cause to pour contempt upon Christianity by the errors of its professors!

9. Because I would not have the impression on my mind while in this life, or the remembrance at the bar of future judgment, that I had “reversed” Christ’s order, which is the case in infant baptism, or altered the mode which his wisdom ordained; preferring to follow my SAVIOUR’S plain and endeared example, and to abide by his sacred and authoritative instructions.

I will now imagine that you, my reader, are convinced that we have the truth on this subject: allow me then, in behalf of CHRIST, to exhort you *practically to attend* to this sacred institution. Do you ask, *What is prerequisite to baptism?* I answer these three things:—(1.) To see and feel that you are a sinner, and need the remission of sins, Acts ii. 38. (2.) That you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and rely on him as your only Saviour, Acts viii. 37. (3.) That you

feel willing to forsake all ungodliness, and to devote your future life to the service and glory of your Redeemer; willing, and not ashamed, to put on Christ, and follow him to the skies, Rom. vi. 4; Gal. iii. 27.

If these things are found in you, and you are convinced of the will of CHRIST, delay not *doing* his will. "*If ye love me,*" said he, "*keep my commandments.*" Do not entertain frivolous excuses.

1. Do not say "you are too young." At *twelve years* of age your Lord appeared in public, doing the will of his Father; if you have reached that age, it is *high time* to commence a life of dedication to Christ. Go, youthful reader, and follow the Lamb in the morning of life. Who knows but your sun may go down at noon! His promise is, "They that seek me early shall find me."

2. Do not say "you are too old." If you have far exceeded the age above-mentioned, and yet hear the Saviour's voice "*Follow me,*" you are not too old to obey his endeared commands.

3. Do not say "what good can it do you?" Behold your Lord entering the waters of Jordan! Are you wiser or better than He? Beware that you reflect not on his wisdom.

4. Does the ordinance appear a *cross* to you? and especially so, as it is something that does not

fall in with the *taste* and *fancy* of the world? Thank God for that. Christ never intended his religion, or his ordinances, to suit the fancies of unregenerate men; and the more objectionable this ordinance is to such persons, so much more effectual is it *as a line of demarcation* between the world and his church, as the Lord Jesus intended. And as to the *cross*,—do you think it is too heavy? Behold Him passing through the baptism of his inconceivable sufferings *for you!* Behold Him carrying the cross upon which he was suspended for many hours; and thereon, by his dying pains, working out eternal redemption *for you!* And will you, turning from these unparalleled scenes, say the cross of baptism is too heavy for *you?* Impossible, if you feel aright.

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